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Manly Piety

a Book
for Young Men

R. PHILIP, D.D.

MANLY PIETY

A Book for Young Men.

BY

ROBERT PHILIP, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF 'THE EXPERIMENTAL GUIDES,' ETC. ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY REV. ALBERT BARNES, AND MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR BY HIS SON.

New and Revised Edition.

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PREFACE.

THE republication of *The Experimental Guides*, and *The Eternal*, having met with an encouraging reception, it has been determined to complete the series by the addition of the present volume. *Manly Piety* was one of the most useful of its Author's books, its object being to commend to young men the great truths of revealed religion, by arguments based upon the principles of common sense. It will be found that the subjects which are now so keenly debated amongst all sections of the Christian Church, such as, 'The Efficacy of Prayer,' 'The Nature of the Atonement,' and 'The Eternity of Future Punishment,' are discussed in its pages; and, whatever opinions may be formed of its merits, it is at least free from obscurity of style. Its Author possessed deep convictions of religious truth, to which he was enabled to give clear and forcible expression; and in these days of 'advanced thought,' when the borderlands of truth and error are so beclouded with the mists and fogs of sceptical philosophy, a book which

seeks to map out the lines of demarcation, may render essential service to thoughtful readers.

The Unitarian controversy, which has been recently reopened, is fully treated in the chapter on 'Religious Mystery,' and the opinions therein expressed are strikingly confirmed by an article in the *British Quarterly Review* for January 1878. As a proof that the arguments contained in this volume are adapted to the controversies of the present day, it may be mentioned that part of the chapter on 'Faith in Providence' was published as an anonymous pamphlet in 1872, during the discussion on the efficacy of prayer, and was most favourably criticized by the Press. The American edition of *Manly Piety* contained an 'Introductory Essay' by the Rev. Albert Barnes, of Philadelphia, which is here reproduced.

The 'Memoir of the Author' was originally compiled for family use, but was considered by competent judges to possess some interest for a wider circle; as, although he was extensively known through his writings, yet few even of his most intimate friends were acquainted with the amount of work he had accomplished during a ministry of more than forty years.

The object of this biography is not to give expression to personal opinions, but to collect and condense those of eminent men, well qualified to estimate the character of the Author and the value of his work.

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MEMOIR.

Birthplace—Ministry of Rev. George Cowie—His character—Story of his conversion—Influence of his labours—Friendship with William Milne—The church at Huntly—Its 'cloud of witnesses'—Deposition of Mr. Cowie—Sunday schools—Removal to Aberdeen—Acquaintance with Dr. Philip—Entrance on the ministry—Hoxton Academy—Dr. Simpson, his character and influence—Settlement at Newington Chapel, Liverpool—Ministry to seamen—*The Bethel Flag*—Sermon on death of the Princess Charlotte—Marriage—Tour to the Lakes—Visit to Wordsworth and Southey—Letter from Southey—Removal to London—Recognition service at Maberly Chapel—Early ministry in London—Congregational Union Lectures—Publication of the *Experimental Guides*—Their success in Great Britain and America—Rev. Albert Barnes's Essay—Letter from Rev. J. A. Clark of Philadelphia, his visit to London—Letter from Bishop Wilson of Calcutta—Publication of *The Lady's Closet Library*—Royal acknowledgment—Pastoral work—Testimony of David Nasmith and Rev. David Loxton—Missionary tours—Letter from George Bennet, Esq., the missionary traveller—Friendship with Thomas Thompson, Esq.—Pamphlets on Chinese Missions and the Opium Traffic—Publication of his biographies—Reviews from *Times* newspaper and *Chambers's Journal*—Opinions of Rev. J. Angell James and Dr. Philip—Continental travel—Alpine scenery—

Pilgrim Mission in the Black Forest—Dr. Hoffman of Basle —Publication of *The Eternal*—Review by Dr. Vaughan— American diploma—Domestic trials—Close of his ministry— Last illness and death — Newspaper criticism — Letters of sympathy from Dr. Raffles, Rev. John Clayton, Rev. George Legge, LL.D., Rev. Dr. Spence, Rev. George Gilfillan, and Thomas Thompson, Esq.—Results of his ministry—Conclusion.

MEMOIR.

'Posthumous reputation is the veriest bubble with which Satan ever deceived a soul; but posthumous usefulness, that is indeed a thing to be coveted.'—REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

THE market town of Huntly, Aberdeenshire, is the capital of Strathbogie, a district which has become famous in the history of the Disruption of the Scottish Kirk as the scene of the dispute which then arose between the authorities of Church and State, the issues of which momentous conflict are still most powerfully influencing the times in which we live. The surrounding scenery can hardly be called either beautiful or sublime; yet in summer the Castle Park, with its picturesque old ruins towering over the clear trout stream flowing beneath, and the little kirkyard of Dumbennan, nestling amidst the neighbouring hills, are spots worthy of a visit by the traveller—the latter more especially, for there, beneath a plain and unpretending monument, rest the honoured remains of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, whose name is still cherished with reverence and affection by all the country round, although nearly eighty years have passed away since

'devout men made great lamentation over him,' and, in company with a great assembly of mourners, laid him in his last quiet resting-place. There 'his body was buried in peace, but his name liveth for evermore;' and on his tombstone are inscribed the appropriate words of Daniel: 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'

The name of George Cowie, 'the Whitefield of the North,' is a household word throughout the north of Scotland, and the influence of his ministry has been perpetuated in the succession of ministers and missionaries who (as Dr. Kennedy testifies in his *Memoir of Dr. Spence*) 'have gone forth from this circle, and have been heard of more or less in Britain and the world.'

One of this number, Robert Philip, the subject of this memoir, was born at Huntly in the month of May 1791. His father was an elder in Mr. Cowie's church, and belonged to a band of Christian men of the true Puritan type, trained under his influence and example, whose impress on the character of the inhabitants of Huntly continues to this day. Another of their descendants, Dr. Legge, who is now Professor of Chinese in the University of Oxford, writing of Mr. Cowie, says: 'He was a man of rare gifts, with the spirit of an apostle. Simple as a child in the ways of the world, he was mighty in the Scriptures, and a knowledge of the human heart.' An

instance of his fine tact in dealing with men, is recorded in the *Life and Letters of the Duchess of Gordon*:—

'One of his attached hearers was the wife of a wealthy farmer, who, after weeping and praying in vain for her ungodly husband, brought her grief before her pastor, whose preaching she could by no persuasion induce him to hear. After listening to the case, which seemed quite inaccessible, he inquired, "Is there anything your good man has a liking to?" "He heeds for nothing in this world," was the reply, "forby his beasts and his siller, an' it be na' his fiddle." The hint was enough; the minister soon found his way to the farmhouse, where, after a dry reception and kindly inquiries about cattle and corn, he awoke the farmer's feelings on the subject of his favourite pastime. The fiddle was produced, and the farmer was astonished and charmed with the sweet music it gave forth in the hands of the feared and hated man of God. The minister next induced him to promise to return his call, by the offered treat of a finer instrument in his own house, where he was delighted with the swelling tones of a large violin, and needed then but slight persuasion from his wife to accompany her and hear his friend preach. The word took effect in his conviction and conversion.'

The remarkable story of Mr. Cowie's conversion is related by Dr. James Hamilton in his *Lectures on the Parable of the Prodigal Son*: 'In the town of Huntly

there was living, a hundred years ago, a lad lately returned from College, whose only quarrel with a rough and regardless neighbourhood was the insufficient scope it gave to his love of fun and frolic. Having heard a great deal about London, and believing it was the place where every man might do that which is good in his own eyes, he gathered all together and took his journey to the southern capital. On his road, however, he turned aside to visit a relation, who had himself led a life of notorious wickedness, but whose friendship he wished to retain. This relative he found on a bed of sickness; but although his bodily sufferings were great, they were almost swallowed up in the anguish of his spirit. In a fearful tide of remorse, his sinful life came surging back on his memory, and loud were the cries for mercy, and vehement the promises of amendment, which he offered in every gasping interval. God spared him, and eventually he recovered; but recovering, he returned to the old excess of riot. But though he forgot his own vows and prayers, his visitor could not forget them; not only did they drive all thoughts of folly from his mind, but they sent him home a crushed and frightened penitent. At last, having obtained mercy, he startled his fellow-townsmen by standing up in the market-place and urging them to "flee from the wrath to come;" and although at first scoffs and derision and angry missiles were his recompense, through a long life he persisted in snatching brands from the burning, and giving multitudes in Banff

and Moray reason to bless his solemn and rousing ministrations.'

Such was the commencement of the apostolic ministry under which Robert Philip passed his boyhood. He thus enjoyed great religious advantages from his earliest childhood, and in his riper years has borne ample testimony to the holy influence then exerted upon him. In one of his latest publications he says: 'In Huntly there was a circle of such thinkers, readers, and men of prayer around Mr. Cowie as were rarely seen in any single church. The Rev. Rowland Hill often spoke of these villagers and their pastor as men deservedly wondered at.'

One of his earliest and most intimate friends and companions was William Milne of Kennethmont, who afterwards became the celebrated Chinese missionary. In writing of these early days in his *Life of Dr. Milne*, he says: 'We had both mused as well as played upon the same spots, and sat upon the same grey stones and mossy hillocks, gazing at Old Noth, "the throne of the clouds," and at the ruins of the Old Castle in the valley. Our lips and hands had often been "as blue as blaeverts" with blackberries gathered amongst the same heather knolls and bushes. Besides, these spots were dear to us both as ground hallowed by the memory of our pastor, Mr. Cowie, who sometimes preached and catechized in the neighbourhood, and by the labours of his elders, who often visited the Sabbath schools in turn.'

Of these elders and teachers he says: 'We only

thought of them as the best men in Huntly amongst many good men; but when we first met in England, we spoke of them as wonderful men, for we had found no parallels to them anywhere in the same rank of life. We thus discovered that our mind and character had been brought into contact with genius as well as extraordinary piety, although we knew it not at the moment. The late Dr. Waugh grew up amongst such men, and caught all their virtues without any of their peculiarities. England saw in him what the generality of the Covenanters would have been had they been treated as he was. William Milne and myself recognised at once in Dr. Waugh all that we had seen in Mr. Cowie, or dreamed of in "Maister Peden," but all softened by the urbanities and polish of English courtesy. I can scarcely credit my own recollections of the devotional habits of these men, although my own father was one of them, and they my best friends after his death. They could do little else than pray for the conversion of the world, and therefore they often spent the whole night in prayer, for "the burden of the Lord was upon them." Thus the church at Huntly was emphatically a missionary society. Its pastor and elders impressed a missionary character upon all its movements, and no quarter yielded more or better missionaries than Aberdeenshire.'

For the character and ministry of his first pastor, Mr. Cowie, Robert Philip ever cherished the warmest veneration, and in his *Life and Times of George*

Whitefield he thus testifies concerning him: 'Rowland Hill knew and loved one minister in Scotland, the late Cowie of Huntly, for his resemblance to Whitefield. I do not wonder at this, for it was Whitefield's likeness to Cowie that first won my heart. I saw in the busts and read in the books of George Whitefield the express image of George Cowie, the pastor of my boyhood.

'I was not twelve years old when he died, but the majestic music of his voice is yet in my ear, and the angelic benevolence of his countenance yet before my eye. I loved him, because he loved me for my father's sake when my father died. In worldly affairs he was a perfect child, but when he spoke of "the mysteries of the kingdom," it was as true of him as of Job, that "the young men hid themselves, and the aged laid their hands on their mouth." His childlike simplicity in the business of life added to this charm; it was in such striking contrast to the keen shrewdness, almost akin to cunning, which marked the bargainings of many of his neighbours.

'Mr. Cowie had incurred the displeasure of the Synod of the Antiburghers, the body to which he originally belonged, on account of his advocacy of Foreign Missions, and his co-operation with Rowland Hill and the Haldanes. He sacrificed both his name and his place, influential as they were, that he might promote Foreign Missions, home itinerancies, and Sunday schools.'

On the day he was summoned to appear before the

Synod to defend himself from these charges, he employed Robert Philip, then a mere lad, to carry the books necessary for his defence from his library to the top of the pulpit stairs. He says: 'I handed them to him as he required them. It was a long defence, but I felt no weariness, although I did not understand its real merits. I was sure that nobody could answer him.' He opened a Sunday school in connection with his church—a novelty at that time, and Robert Philip became one of its most distinguished scholars. It was usual, after the catechizing, for the more advanced members of the class to offer remarks on a particular text of Scripture which they had previously studied—a sort of juvenile theological essay. In these exercises Robert Philip stood first amongst no mean competitors, and his efforts in this direction were long remembered by his classmates in his native town. On one of these occasions he was brought under the notice of the Rev. John Philip, D.D., the minister of the Congregational Church at Aberdeen, afterwards the superintendent of South African Missions at the Cape of Good Hope, who was then on a sacramental visit to Huntly. This interview resulted in Dr. Philip taking a deep interest in his young friend, who soon after removed from Huntly to Grandholm Works, Aberdeen, where he obtained a clerkship, and, becoming a member of Dr. Philip's church, was encouraged by him to turn his attention to the Christian ministry. He was brought into close intimacy with Dr. Philip, spent his Sundays with him, and was

treated as one of his family.[1] He always felt and expressed the most grateful affection for one whom he regarded as his spiritual father; and on publishing his *Manly Piety* in 1834, he dedicated it to Dr. Philip, 'as to a father, by his grateful son in the Gospel, the author.' In the preface to the same work, he says 'he can never forget the manly counsel and example which he himself received from the philanthropist to whom he inscribes it.'

While at Grandholm Works, he opened a Sunday school for the benefit of the children employed in the manufactory. At this period this was quite an innovation on the ecclesiastical system, and brought down on him the censure of the minister of the parish; but so well did he defend his cause, and prove the necessity of continuing the institution, that he retired only on the condition of the school being carried on by qualified persons from the Established Church, which was done; and he had thus the merit of giving the first impulse to the establishment of Sunday schools in that part of the country. The three years he was at Grandholm, he continued to pursue his studies, under the supervision of Dr. Philip, preparatory to entering Hoxton Academy in 1811. He arrived in England from the north on the very day that the lamented Thomas Spencer was drowned at Liverpool, little thinking that he was destined in the

[1] It is perhaps necessary to state here, that although bearing the same surname, there did not exist the slightest family relationship between Dr. Philip and the subject of this memoir.

providence of God to occupy his vacant pulpit at Newington Chapel.

At Hoxton Academy he enjoyed the theological training of its distinguished President, Dr. Robert Simpson, for whom he always cherished the warmest affection and veneration. He was a man of robust intellectual character and large attainments, and possessed many amiable qualities, by which he attracted and retained in a remarkable degree, the confidence and affection of his students. He was, above all, 'a man of God,' who was 'mighty in prayer.' Amongst Robert Philip's contemporaries at Hoxton, were John Morison, James Stratten, Richard Winter Hamilton, John Ely, and others, who became eminent ministers; and amidst such influences, it is easy to perceive how his early training, under Mr. Cowie and Dr. Philip, would develope that strong attachment to the old Puritan theology which was so characteristic of his ministry and his writings. He left College at the close of 1814, and commenced his pastorate at Newington Chapel, Liverpool, in the pulpit of the youthful Thomas Spencer, the brevity of whose brilliant career has been so often lamented.

On the removal of Dr. Raffles to Great George Street Chapel, with the larger portion of the congregation, those who remained invited Mr. Philip to become their pastor. He accepted their invitation, and for eleven years laboured diligently in their midst. During his residence in this important seaport town, he took a deep interest in all classes of the population,

but especially in its sailors. He commenced a series of services for the seamen of the port. He threw open his chapel on Sunday evenings especially for their accommodation, and was repaid by crowded and attentive audiences.

The *Congregational Magazine* for March 1819 thus describes them: 'Mr. Philip has commenced a course of lectures at Newington Chapel, Liverpool, addressed to the British and American seamen of the port. The attendance is equally great and affecting. Nothing could exceed the decorum and solemnity of these marine assemblies.' These sermons were afterwards published by request, under the title of *The Bethel Flag; or, Sermons to Seamen.*

In a new edition of this work, published by the Religious Tract Society in 1867, the editor says, 'It was amongst the earliest efforts made for evangelizing a numerous and important, but previously neglected class of the community. When Mr. Philip and his colleagues commenced this work of preaching to sailors, failure was confidently predicted. These discouraging forebodings, however, have been abundantly confuted by the result. There are now few ports or harbours in Great Britain in which the Bethel flag is not duly hoisted every Lord's day, and where, ashore or afloat, sailors do not hear "the glad tidings of great joy" proclaimed.'

There was no part of his ministerial work in which he took greater pleasure, and in his *Life of Dr. Milne* he thus refers to it. Speaking of Dr. Milne preaching

to the sailors at sea, he says: 'Perhaps I may be allowed to say that missionaries or ministers cannot please sailors more than by taking a hearty and open interest in their improvement. I speak from experience. During some years I preached regularly to sailors in Liverpool, and never with more pleasure. Any minister will gain their respect and confidence, if he will throw himself upon their honour, and show himself their friend.'

In order to fit himself to talk to sailors, he made himself master of their nautical 'lingo,' and familiarized himself with the scenes and incidents of a sailor's life; so that he could speak to them as one of themselves, and thus gain a power to move their rough but susceptible hearts, mightier than the most polished eloquence would have been. The following brief extracts from these sermons may be interesting. One from the text Heb. vi. 19, 20, on 'The anchor of the soul,' speaking of heaven, and comparing it with the Holy of Holies in the Jewish temple, he says: 'In like manner is heaven concealed from us as by a thick curtain; we cannot see the celestial temple with our bodily eyes, but we are as sure that there is such a place as that there is a God. The veil hides it, indeed, but only as deep water hides good ground. For example, you cannot see the bottom of the river: it is within the veil of the water; but in order to fix the anchor, you have only to veer away sufficient range of cable, and the vessel soon rides in safety. So in regard to heaven; veer away plenty of thought and

prayer, and the anchor of hope will reach within the veil, and take fast hold of an eternal weight of glory. And when the soul has gained such an anchorage, there is not a gale that blows, can drive her from her moorings; but she will ride out every storm, until she is laid up in the haven of eternal rest "to go no more out."'

In another sermon on the text, 'Who will show us any good?' (Ps. iv. 6, 7), he says in conclusion: 'In a word, then, I only ask you to judge of the service of God, as you do of the sea service. You laugh at the landsmen who think there is no enjoyment at sea. You hold them cowards, who would not risk a gale, nor trust themselves in a ship. Give you only good wages and a good ship, and you prefer the sea with all its dangers, to the land. Now, so it is with the servants of God; if there are storms on the voyage to heaven, there is a good vessel to sail in: the Captain of Salvation is a good master to sail under, and the port of glory is sure! The present wages are gladness of heart; and the future prize-money, pleasures for evermore. Many have entered this good service; and yet there is room for you all.'

In 1842, the rector of a Cornish living, wrote to a friend in Liverpool, to inquire if it was possible to obtain a copy of *The Bethel Flag*, an imperfect one of which he had accidentally met with. He says: 'All the sermons are admirable, but the one on the atonement, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" is the finest I ever read. I have read it to several friends, and, though an extempore preacher, in my own church,

and that of a friend, with universal acceptation. I don't know or care to what denomination Mr. Philip belongs, but I can say to him, as he would to me, "Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."' This letter was forwarded to the author, who sent the rector his last remaining copy. That he did not neglect the higher order of pulpit eloquence, may be proved from the fact that a sermon he preached on the death of the Princess Charlotte, in November 1817, was published by request, and that he received in acknowledgment a letter of thanks from her illustrious husband, Prince Leopold, afterwards King of the Belgians, who accepted it as an expression of 'real participation and interest in his grief.'

A brief extract from this discourse may be here cited as a specimen of his powers of pulpit oratory, at this period of his ministry :—

'Men, brethren, and fathers, descend with me into the vault at Windsor; come and see the place where Royalty puts off its robes! These splendid coffins, these sparkling urns, these regal insignia,

"Mock the grief that lurks beneath,
Like roses on a sepulchre."

Look within. Embalming may deprive the worm of a banquet, lead may exclude the waste of elements, and seals the intrusion of the profane; but the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," will take effect in defiance of lead, and in contempt of odours. Except the dear ideas associated

with the ashes of Charlotte Augusta, there is nothing in the Royal vault which is not beneath the rustic gravestone of the peasant. Here we are "bone of their bone," and "flesh of their flesh;" in the grave "the rich and the poor meet together." Do you feel in this scene, the insignificance of rank and honour? How insignificant, then, the petty distinctions of common men: If a Crown be a bauble upon the sepulchre, anything we grasp at in our lowly spheres, "is less than nothing, and vanity." And yet, are there not some of us, sacrificing for a little money, for a momentary pleasure, for the gratification of a passion, the hopes and felicities of eternity? Thou fool! it could not profit thee to gain the whole world, if thy soul is lost by the effort. What would it avail thee to lie down under laurels, and the lustre of torches, if in earning these thou hast neglected "the one thing needful"?'

During his ministry in Liverpool, he formed the acquaintance of the lady, Miss Hannah Lassell, who afterwards became his wife, and whose gentle and loving spirit was his greatest earthly consolation during all the vicissitudes and trials of his life. She was a daughter of Mr. Nathaniel Lassell, of Bolton, Lancashire. She was esteemed by all who knew her, as a lady of the most amiable temper and devoted piety, characteristics which distinguished her to the end of a long life, and for which her children's children yet 'rise up and call her blessed.' She was eminently qualified to become a minister's wife, and

was beloved by all who came within the circle of her influence. They were married in July 1818, and went for their wedding tour to the English Lakes. On this occasion Mr. Philip made the acquaintance of the celebrated Lake poets, Southey and Wordsworth, with both of whom he afterwards corresponded.

The following letter is published in *Southey's Life* by his son (vol. v. p. 233), showing that one of the poets retained agreeable recollections of this brief visit :—

'To the Rev. Robert Philip.

'KESWICK, *15th August* 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,—On returning home after an absence of several weeks, I found, and was pleased to find, your friendly letter, and the books which accompanied it. For the one relating to South America, I must beg you to express my thanks where they are due. Having inquired so diligently into the history and condition of that wide country, during many years, I am glad to possess any documents which may enable me to correct, or otherwise improve, the result of my researches. . . . I thank you for your own volume (*The Bethel Flag*). You have undertaken a labour of love where it was greatly needed, and you will have your reward. I cannot doubt but that some of the seed you have sown, will take root and bring forth fruit. No person can look with more eagerness than I do for your *Life and Times of Whitefield*, nor will any one who peruses it be better disposed to be pleased with the perusal. The points on which I may expect you

to differ from me are not unimportant ones, but they are less important than those on which I am sure that we agree. And my temper will always lead me to consider a fair and generous opponent, almost as a friend. Mrs. Southey joins with me in remembrance to Mrs. Philip, and desires me to say, she has not forgotten the few but pleasant hours in which we enjoyed your conversation seven summers ago.—Yours with sincere esteem and regard,

'ROBERT SOUTHEY.'

In describing this tour to the Lakes in his later years, he says: 'I heard Wordsworth recite his own *Ode to Immortality*, under the great cataract at Rydal.'

After labouring diligently and successfully for eleven years in Liverpool, Mr. Philip removed in 1826 to London, where he undertook the pastorate of Maberly Chapel, Kingsland. The circumstances which led to this removal were thus described by him in the address delivered to the church and congregation at his recognition service at Maberly Chapel in May 1826:—

'During ten years I dwelt amongst my own people, deeming it my duty to be very seldom from home. At the end of that period, I ventured for the first time to revisit London, at the invitation of my respected friend, Thomas Wilson, Esq., to supply the pulpit of Hoxton Chapel. During that visit, it pleased God to render His word acceptable from my lips, and in some instances useful. Reports of this

were sent to Liverpool, and so widely circulated there, that when I returned home, I found that my congregation were unsettled by them. I immediately did everything in my power to remove all fear of my leaving, but in vain. I had promised to visit Hoxton again, and that one circumstance rendered my people hopeless. This feeling was still further promoted by two invitations which followed me home. I declined both at once, but to no purpose. It was suspected that my friends in London were determined to tempt me away, and therefore it was thought useless to oppose them.

'This opinion being avowed publicly, increased my invitations to leave, and thus made bad worse. My health and spirits sank under the pressure of anxiety. It became my duty to resign. I did so, but not until I had broken off every negotiation which had been opened with me from other places. I resigned without a prospect or a promise of any appointment whatever, that neither the world nor the church might have to say that I was tempted by money! God is my witness, that I went out from Liverpool, not knowing where to go or look, and that I did so, "that the ministry might not be blamed." That week I had to preach at Blackburn, at the ordination of Mr. Fletcher's successor, where I met with many of my brethren. They united in blaming me; my best friends thought that I had tempted providence by throwing myself thus entirely upon it. While listening to their remonstrances, I began to

fear that I had done wrong; and although I could not doubt my own disinterestedness in the step I had taken, the prudence of it began to appear very doubtful. At that moment a letter from London was brought to me. It contained an urgent invitation to visit Maberly Chapel, as a candidate for the pulpit. It may be easily imagined that the timeliness of this providential interference made a deep impression on all present. I could only say, "Brethren, God does not think that I tempted His providence." It afterwards appeared that while I was writing my resignation in Liverpool, the letter of invitation was being written in London. I then submitted the case to my friend, Dr. William Harris, and his advice was: "This is the hand of God; follow it, and do as you are requested." I obeyed, and accordingly am here this day.'

The pastorate thus commenced, was carried on with unremitting vigour and constancy for thirty years.

During his early ministry in London, he frequently preached four times on Sunday, taking the early morning lecture at Broad Street, and the afternoon at a chapel at the West End, in addition to preaching twice in his own pulpit. In September 1826, he preached one of a course of twelve lectures on the 'Evidences of Revelation,' delivered at the monthly meetings of the associated churches of the London Congregational Union, by some of its leading ministers, including the names of Drs. Pye Smith, Andrew Reed,

Collyer, and Joseph Fletcher, Revs. James Stratten, Spedding Curwen, and others. They were afterwards published, and a review in *The Spirit and Manners of the Age* for 1827, thus criticises his lecture on 'The Practical Influence of Christianity, as furnishing an Evidence of its Divine Origin':—'Mr. Philip has discovered all the acumen of an able and experienced reasoner. He has fairly turned the tables upon the enemies of the Gospel, with peculiar dexterity. He appears to us in this glorious contest, to be one of those sharpshooters so useful in skirmishes,—he brings down a foe in the twinkling of an eye.'

This volume of lectures, although now quite unknown, contains some most masterly defences of the doctrines of Christianity, amongst which may be especially mentioned, one on the 'Resurrection of Christ,' by Dr. Pye Smith, and another on 'The Success of the Gospel,' by Dr. Andrew Reed.

About the year 1830 he commenced the publication of a series of small volumes, entitled *The Experimental Guides*, addressed to various classes of Evangelical Christians. The wide circulation they attained, both in this country and America, was a sufficient proof of the estimation in which they were held. To show that they were welcomed by all sections of the Christian church, it may be mentioned that Bishop Wilson of Calcutta, who was previously vicar of Islington, the parish in which Maberly Chapel was situated, wrote to the author, just before leaving England to take possession of his diocese, a

letter of most cordial appreciation of his writings. And in America they were collected into three volumes under the title of *The Devotional Guides*, and *Manly Piety*, and brought out under the editorship of the Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia, the eminent commentator, who in his introductory essay thus describes them :—

'Few religious writings of the present age have been more acceptable to the Christian public, or more useful, than those of the Rev. Robert Philip. They are exclusively addressed to Christians; and they so obviously meet the wants of Christians under various circumstances of life, that even were the execution less able, they could scarcely fail of being highly appreciated by large numbers of the Christian community.

'The happy thought seems to have occurred to the mind of the author, to issue a succession of small books, similar in their character and tendency, that should be adapted to comfort the hearts, relieve the perplexities, and promote the spiritual advancement of Christians.

'These subjects are treated in a way that will be satisfactory to all serious minds. The character of the author's style is evidently fitted to the work which he has undertaken. It is simple, pure, terse, intelligible, occasionally highly beautiful and forcible. It is without affectation, laboured effort, or heaviness. It is sufficiently sprightly for the subject, yet never light or trifling. It is evidently the style of a man who has

much communion with the Sacred Scriptures, and with his own heart.

'He accomplishes an important purpose to his generation, who prepares books on Christian experience, that shall be adapted to meet the evils which threaten the piety of the church. I regard the series of *Guides* here published, as adapted, in an eminent manner, to accomplish this purpose. I should regard their extensive circulation as fitted to promote the spirituality of Christians, to make them acquainted with their own hearts, and with the power of the religion they profess to love, and as an indication of a disposition among Christians, to examine deeply the foundations of their piety, and to cultivate communion with God.'

The first volume of the series, entitled *Christian Experience; or, A Guide to the Perplexed*, reached a tenth edition in this country, and in a postscript to the second edition the author says: 'It may be both pleasing and useful to know that this little work, now so widely circulated, has been blessed by God in a degree, which ought to be publicly acknowledged. The history of its usefulness would form a valuable record, but of course I dare not publish it.'

In America their circulation was far more extensive, as may be seen by the following critique, selected from many American journals. '*The American Literary Advocate* says, 'no modern theological works are so widely circulated amongst all denominations in America, as Mr. Philip's.' It has been com-

puted that more than 100,000 of the *Guides* were sold in that country.

The following letter from an American Episcopal clergyman, may be quoted as a specimen of the correspondence which resulted from the publication of *The Guides.* It was written by the Rev. J. A. Clark, rector of St. Andrews, Philadelphia, in 1836:—

'DEAR SIR,—I have been so long in the habit of being instructed, edified, and refreshed by the productions of your pen, that I feel, in addressing you, as though I was speaking to a very dear and much loved friend. Your excellent *Guides* have guided many pastors as well as their flocks, and brought them nearer to the Cross. In my own charge, your *Guides* have been greatly blessed to many, especially *The Guide to the Perplexed.* That little volume has shed light over the path of many, who before walked in darkness.'

In 1838 Mr. Clark paid a visit to England, in the course of an extensive tour through some of the principal cities of Europe. On his return to America, he published an account of his travels under the title of *Glimpses of the Old World,* and in it he gives an amusing description of his attempt to discover Mr. Philip's residence at Newington Green. Of his interview with him he says: 'I have had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, and found myself quite as much delighted with the man, as I had formerly been with his books. Mr. Philip is one of the most affable and agreeable men that I have met with in

England. He seems to have a very correct idea of our country and its institutions.'

The publication of the *Guides* was followed by the series entitled *The Lady's Closet Library*, comprising *The Marys*, *The Marthas*, *The Hannahs*, and *The Lydias*. They were considered by many competent judges to be some of the most skilful productions of his pen, and were interspersed with eastern allegories in the style of the Jewish Talmud, many of which were most original and striking.

The first volume, entitled *The Marys; or, The Beauty of Female Holiness*, was dedicated by permission to H.R.H. the Princess Victoria, our present noble Queen, who, with her mother the Duchess of Kent, graciously accepted copies of the work. The second volume, *The Marthas; or, Varieties of Female Piety*, was dedicated by special permission to Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, who had previously honoured the author with her Royal acknowledgment of a complete set of *The Experimental Guides*.

While carrying on these extensive literary labours, he did not neglect his pastoral duties. We may gain a glimpse of the manner in which he fulfilled them, from the *Life of David Nasmith*, the founder of the London City Mission, who was for some time a member of his church. In a letter to a friend, dated about the period to which we now refer, he says: 'I would have you, and all I wish well, to become intimate with my present pastor, the Rev. Robert Philip, of Maberly Chapel, through his precious

writings. His is the preaching that does my soul good. I esteem it a great privilege to sit under him. The church is in a very healthful state. Finding myself with such a captain, I have had pleasure in saying, "Tell me what I can do to help forward the Lord's work in conjunction with my brethren."' Another pleasing result of his pastoral labours is recorded in the memoir of the Rev. David Loxton of Sheffield, prefixed to a volume of his sermons, recently published.

But, whilst thus fully engaged in the pulpit and the press, he entered heartily into all works of charity and usefulness, at home and abroad. The cause of Foreign Missions was especially dear to him; and from his early association with Dr. Milne, and afterwards with his colleague Dr. Morrison, the 'Land of Sinim' might be said to be engraved upon his heart. The promotion of missionary enterprise, especially amongst the teeming millions of the Chinese empire, was with him no mere department of church work, but the passion of his life, a veritable 'enthusiasm of humanity.' He undertook several journeys as part of a deputation on behalf of the London Missionary Society, in various parts of the kingdom; and on one of these occasions, he was in the company of George Bennet, Esq., the missionary traveller, who, in a letter dated October 5, 1833, thus records his recollections of the tour in which they had been engaged: 'I must say in all Christian simplicity, that the month during which I was favoured to be associated with you in

works of faith and labours of love in Northamptonshire, will long be amongst those which memory will delight to cherish, on account of the favour which God was pleased to give us in the eyes of esteemed ministerial brethren, and the numerous Christian friends with whom we had intercourse; on account of the prosperous result to the cause which lies near to our hearts; and, though last, not least, on account of the personal benefit in Christian temper and experience which I have derived from our intimate communications with each other, during those rapid but delightful weeks of our deputational association.'

He became a director of the London Missionary Society, and as a constant attendant at its board, he formed an intimate friendship with the late Thomas Thompson, Esq. of Poundsford Park. This friendship continued without interruption for a quarter of a century, and terminated only in death. They were called in their own circle, and were delighted to call themselves, 'The Two Friends,' and laboured together in many efforts for the public good, illustrating Aristotle's definition of perfect friendship—'one soul in two bodies.' But one subject absorbed their deepest interest, viz. the evangelization of China, and by the constant publication of pamphlets, they sought to awaken the attention of the Christian church to the importance of its claims. The first of these pamphlets, entitled *Open China*, was published in 1834; and although the statements contained in it were at first smiled at as the theories of a dreamer,

they have now proved to be substantial facts, and the large and flourishing churches already gathered in China, indicate that, in spite of sceptical assertions to the contrary, Missions are no failure in that country. The following extract from these Chinese pamphlets, will serve to show the far-reaching view they took of the future of that vast empire :—

'Let us look at China as the mystery of the world. It is the greatest empire on earth, and yet the least known. It is the most ancient of all empires, and yet has no distinct place in ancient history. It is the most literary of all existing heathen nations, and yet its language is almost an enigma in the Universities of Europe. Its policy is both unsocial and insolent in the extreme, and yet, until of late, all nations have succumbed to its haughty selfishness. Thus for countless ages one-third of the human race has lain within the great wall of China, looking on the rest of mankind as barbarians, worthy only of pity or contempt. But China is the mystery of the church, as well as of the world. Yet even this mystery will be cleared up to the whole universe. We affirm, upon the authority of the word of God (Isa. xlix. 13, 14), that, come when that empire may to Christ, it will come in a manner that will make the church in both worlds sing for joy. A church will arise in the "land of Sinim," such as the world has never yet seen, or angels watched, or the Saviour presided over. Philosophy itself will be transformed into faith, when the church places the crown of China upon the head of Christ.'

In an obituary notice, published in the *Patriot* newspaper, the following reference is made to these pamphlets: 'Let any survivor recollect Robert Philip in connection with China closed and China opened to the Christian missionary, and he will recognise some traces of Christian heroism.' The atrocities of the opium traffic in China also awoke their most indignant remonstrances, and the first public appeal for the abolition of the opium trade in China was made by Mr. Philip and Mr. Thompson in a pamphlet published by them in 1835, entitled *No Opium; or, Commerce and Christianity, working together for good in China.* By a Minister and a Layman.

The following extract from its closing paragraph explains the object they had in view, for the furtherance of which they united during many years, in appealing to the Christian public in Britain and America. This they called, 'sounding the Chinese gong':—

'"No opium!" must be made as loud and general a watchword as "No slavery!" was, if we would as a nation "fear God, or regard man." And it shall be made so, if the press can do it.'

'The seed they cast upon the waters' is being 'found after many days,' and it is to be hoped that the awakening conscience of the English nation upon the subject, will not again be allowed to slumber, until the Government is shamed into the suppression of this 'infernal traffic.' That the Chinese Government are fully prepared to do their share towards promoting such a desirable consum-

mation, is proved by a letter published in the *Times* newspaper of 24th January 1878.

A correspondent at Pekin writes to the *London and China Telegraph*:—'You will have observed the Edict of October 13, against opium cultivation and smoking. The price of opium has risen greatly. The Government seems to be in earnest. Many of the opium dens have been closed, a wholesome dread has seized the minds of the people, and there seems a widespread desire to get rid of the habit. The Christians of Pekin have held several meetings, with the view of organizing an anti-opium association. They are anxious to provide a refuge for the smoker who wishes to give up the pipe. The people and officials generally, are talking a great deal about the question. These distressing famines have brought up the question very seriously, and that the Government is issuing strict orders against its cultivation in the teeth of the famine, is equally remarkable. The higher value of the cereals in the distressed districts, will itself militate against the cultivation of the poppy. I found in the streets of Pekin lately, a man selling a large broadsheet for a halfpenny, calling upon the people to give up the evil habit, pointing out the evils of the drug, and the causes of its prevalence, laying great stress upon the lack of a proper bringing up on the part of the parents, and the inculcation of the sentiments and principles of virtue. The man lectures at the same time, and has great crowds around him. He is not a Christian, and seems to be doing it on his

own account. He sells over 200 of these sheets daily. The Envoy to Great Britain has memorialized his Government on the subject of opium.'

It was during this period of his ministry, from 1835 to 1842, that he wrote and published his biographical works,—viz., the *Lives of Whitefield, Bunyan, Dr. Milne,* and *Rev. John Campbell,* the African traveller. With regard to their literary merits, there have been conflicting estimates; but it should be borne in mind, that he did not compile these biographies from a desire to achieve literary fame. His reputation as an author was attained before they were published. He had a far higher object in view,—viz., that which influenced him in all his work through life—usefulness. He therefore never attempted to conciliate the fastidious requirements of critics, nor concealed his opinions to suit popular taste. It may suffice to quote in their favour the opinions of able and competent reviewers.

The first is taken from the *Times* newspaper, of December 20, 1837, being a review of *The Life and Times of George Whitefield, M.A.*:—

'This book will be read with great interest by a very large body of the public—by that portion of readers which is called the religious world; it will also be a book neither unimportant nor uninteresting to readers of all classes. The compiler, Mr. Philip, is well known; he is a most fitting person to write the biography of Whitefield. He has written temperately on a subject in which, though temperance is

most requisite, it is frequently forgótten. He has conferred by his labours, an obligation on all persons to whom the history ot Protestantism in the last century is a matter of investigation. Without concurring in all he says, it may be fairly stated of him that he is an able and impartial biographer.'

In a letter from his friend, the Rev. J. Angell James, of Birmingham, acknowledging a copy of his work, he says: 'I have not got quite through it, but I have gone far enough to give the opinion, not indeed of a critic, to which I have small pretensions, but of an individual who judges of books by the impression they produce upon his own mind. Perhaps it is scarcely egotism or vanity to say that I hope to be the better Christian, and the better preacher for your portrait of that extraordinary man, to whom the present generation owes so much, and all future generations will be indebted. You have, as you say, told the story in your own way. Whether that may be in all particulars in obedience to the rules of taste, different opinions will be entertained; but you have contrived to throw into the memoir that, without which the most elegantly and correctly-written biographies are little worth,—viz., a power to interest the reader, and such a full, fair, and candid exposition of the subject, that he not only can know, but cannot avoid knowing the subject. You have given the best portrait of Whitefield by giving us the man himself from his journals and letters. It is therefore of necessity a true likeness. In general, I think your remarks are sound,

good, and useful, and calculated to do good to your ministerial brethren. Oh for more Whitefields!'

Although two or three *Lives of Whitefield* have since been published, it still retains its place as an authority in church history of the period, and was quoted in that capacity by the *Church Times* so recently as December 1877.

The next criticism is from the early friend of the author, Dr. Philip of South Africa, who never allowed his critical and philosophical mind to be unduly biassed by personal friendship. In a letter from the Cape of Good Hope, dated May 2, 1840, he says: 'I really do not recollect when I read a book with so much interest as your *Life of John Bunyan*. I finished it at one sitting, and I felt, when I had done with it, in reference to it what Johnson said of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, that it was one of those books that, when a man had done reading it, he wished it had been longer.'

The last review is taken from *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* for July 1842, which contains a lengthened notice of the *Life of the Rev. John Campbell*, the African traveller, describing it as 'a book of lively interest, far beyond what would be expected by ordinary readers.'

In 1840 he gained his first experience of Continental travel during a tour to Switzerland and the Rhine. How richly he enjoyed the magnificence of Alpine scenery may be gathered from an extract from his journal: '*Thursday.*—About noon, on the summit of the Dole, on the Jura, the Lake Leman burst suddenly on

the eye, as if half the firmament had fallen in all its glory of azure and light into the gulph between the Jura and the Bernese Alps! The burst was so sudden and sublime, that I wept like a child. I could not speak, my heart throbbed, I gasped for breath. I shall see nothing like this scene, until I behold the sea of glass, mingled with fire, before the throne.'

During his tour he visited the headquarters of the Pilgrim Mission in the Black Forest, which had been recently established in the Old Catholic Church of St. Chrischona; and at the request of Herr Spittler, its founder, he preached a sermon in English, and from the spot in the old church where the Romish priest used to chant the mass, Mr. Philip had the satisfaction of addressing a Lutheran congregation. At Basle, also, he formed an intimate friendship with Dr. Hoffman, Principal of the Missionary Institute, who afterwards became one of the court chaplains of the present Emperor of Germany.

In 1845 he delivered a course of Sunday morning lectures on 'The Attributes of God,' which were published by request, under the title of *The Eternal; or, The God of our Fathers.* This was his last, and is deemed by many his best book, although the least known to the general public, as its original circulation was principally confined to the members of his own congregation. It has, however, been recently republished, and most favourably reviewed. The following criticism on it is taken from *The British Quarterly Review* for August 1846, and conveys the

opinion of its editor, Dr. Vaughan, as to the general merits of his writings (p. 545) :—

Review of *The Eternal*, by Robert Philip: 'The author of this volume is so well known to the religious public, that any attempt on our part to characterize or commend a publication from his pen must be unnecessary. The ease with which Mr. Philip disentangles the substance of his thoughts, and the idiomatic point of the style in which he presents his ideas, must have been felt by every one who has read only a small portion of his writings. Now, here is a book on the Divine attributes, full of thinking and of expression of this order, adapted to awaken and stimulate the mind even of the least educated, and to furnish large materials for reflection to the most educated. It is, in our judgment, the best book produced by its author.'

In 1852, he unexpectedly received a practical recognition of his influence as a religious writer in America. His friend, the Rev. J. C. Bodwell, of Framlingham, Massachusetts, United States, writing to him on 3rd August 1852, says: 'I write a line to express the satisfaction I feel that my alma mater, Dartmouth College, has honoured itself by conferring on you the degree of D.D. Dartmouth is one of the oldest and best colleges in our country, and very cautious in the bestowment of honorary degrees.'

In a subsequent letter he says: 'I am anxious that you should understand that Dartmouth is quite a different affair from the colleges which have been so much in the habit of sending degrees to third and

fourth rate men in the fatherland. Dartmouth confers very few doctor's degrees, and only on the most undeniable evidence of learning and high standing professionally. Yours was one of two conferred at the recent annual commencement. The college takes rank among the first in the United States.'

He soon after received the official announcement of his new dignity from President Lord; but while duly sensible of the honour thus conferred upon him, yet, as he never courted such distinctions, he refrained from using it in public, and few were aware that he possessed it. It has, however, been publicly acknowledged in the recent republication of *The Experimental Guides.*

From this time his work was entirely confined to his pulpit and pastoral duties, and his public life flowed on uneventfully to the close. He had, however, to endure heavy domestic trials, which both saddened his spirits and undermined his health, originally strong and robust, but already enfeebled by his laborious and studious habits. He was now called upon to exchange the activity of his earlier life for the patient endurance of severe bodily and mental affliction, and to undergo the refining process which was to make him meet for his approaching entrance into 'the inheritance of the saints in light.'

There is no subject more practically enforced upon the attention of Christian people than that of affliction. 'Perfect through suffering' has been the motto inscribed upon the banner of all true soldiers of the

Cross, from the great Captain of Salvation down to the meanest of His followers; and those who cannot point to this badge of discipleship, may well doubt whether they have yet made full proof of their profession, or realized the prediction of their Lord when He said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.' One of the profoundest problems that has baffled the mightiest intellects for its solution, is 'the mystery of suffering,' and it seems beyond the power of human comprehension, to understand the processes of that divine alchemy, which can transmute the bitterest tear-drops of earthly sorrow, into the brightest pearls of an immortal crown.

He was now to realize in his own experience the 'everlasting consolation' of the glorious Gospel, which he had so long and faithfully ministered to others.

In 1855, he obtained assistance in his pulpit ministrations; but his health having completely broken down, he was compelled in the autumn of the following year to resign the pastorate of Maberly Chapel, and to quit for ever the sphere he had filled with distinction for more than thirty years. He could say with the apostle, 'I have coveted no man's silver or gold;' for the same disinterestedness which led him, as we have seen, originally to accept the charge, characterized him throughout his whole career, and prevented him from availing himself of the opportunities which were afforded him, of removing to other and more lucrative fields of labour.

His health continued rapidly to decline, and, after

rather more than twelve months of seclusion and suffering, he was called into the presence of the Master he delighted to serve, and to whom he had so unreservedly consecrated the talents entrusted to his stewardship.

He died on 1st May 1858, aged sixty-seven years, and was buried in Abney Park Cemetery, a spot endeared to him by many fond associations of the past, where he now awaits the summons of the Angel of the Resurrection in the company of many of his old ministerial brethren and members of his church and congregation. He lies side by side with his intimate friend and college companion, Dr. Morison of Brompton, who commenced his ministry about the same period, and who died a year after him. 'They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.'

A short biographical notice appeared at the time of his death in the *British Standard*, written by the editor. He says: 'It was our privilege to know Mr. Philip very intimately for the period of thirty years; we are therefore able to form a just estimate of his attainments and his character, and it is but simple justice to say that we have known few more able or more amiable men. He possessed an intellect of great vigour, and singularly independent in its action. Without dogmatism, he was remarkable for self-reliance on every subject—he thought for himself, and almost always correctly. His genius was unusually fertile, and he was richly endowed with

the gift of moral speculation, to which was added, in a high degree, the rare faculty of common sense. His religious writings had a vast run, and were extensively useful. His biographical works also possessed much merit; they were storehouses of fact respecting the parties to whom they refer. Mr. Philip had a heart eminently made for friendship. Himself transparent as the light, he estimated others by his own conscious rectitude, often giving credit for like simplicity to men who ill deserved it. Possessing great conversational powers, Mr. Philip enjoyed society in a very high degree, and amid the friendly circle he would often unbosom himself with a frankness and simplicity very rare in these days of paint and appearance, propriety and hypocrisy. His friends were always glad to meet, and loth to part with him. This excellent man now rests from his labours, and his works do follow him. On earth he has not left an enemy, and multitudes rejoice to acknowledge him as a spiritual benefactor.'

The announcement of his death induced many of his ministerial brethren to address letters of sympathy and condolence to his sorrowing widow, to whom they were a source of great consolation. The following have been selected from the number, as expressing the opinions of eminent men, well qualified to form a correct estimate of his character and work.

The first is from Dr. Raffles of Liverpool, who had heartily co-operated with him during his ministry in that town :—

'LIVERPOOL, *6th May* 1858.

'MY DEAR MRS. PHILIP,—Allow me to express my sincere sympathy and condolence with you in the heavy trial which has just befallen you in the death of my old friend, your late excellent husband. Circumstances had removed us far asunder, and forbidden intercourse for many years; but I still cherish a pleasing remembrance of former times, when we were neighbours and friends, and had communication with each other from day to day. Then we were in the full vigour and freshness of our powers, and laboured pleasantly together in the work and service of Him to whom we were devoted. He has finished his work, and the close of my day cannot be far distant; for in this month, if my life is spared as long as the 17th, I shall attain my seventieth year.

'Oh for grace to be found working and waiting, and in both cases watching when the Master shall come! I trust and feel assured that, with regard to my departed friend, his end was peace. May God graciously sustain and comfort you in this day of your sore affliction! Earnestly commending you and yours to the tender care of our Heavenly Father, who sustains towards you the relation you have lost, for "thy Maker is thy husband,"—I remain, my dear Mrs. Philip, most truly yours,

'THOS. RAFFLES.'

The next is from the Rev. John Clayton, of the Poultry Chapel, who had known him from his college days:—

'BRIGHTON, *4th May* 1858.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just cast my eye on the obituary of a public journal, and have read the record of the death of your excellent husband. I have known, esteemed, and loved him from his very youth, and have often been instructed and incited by his useful publications; and though our absorption in public labours for many years only allowed us short seasons for converse, yet I have been often gratified when those opportunities have occurred, and I have not ceased to sympathise with him amidst the clouds of affliction which gathered round him in the evening of life. "Wicked men," says an old divine, "resemble wild birds which, when caught and caged, beat their plumage to pieces, and wring their necks against the wires; but a child of God, like a tame bird, when brought into trouble, gets up on the perch and cheers his solitary captivity with a song." May ours be, "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." I will not trespass longer on your early hours of grief than to add that, with best wishes for your support and consolation, I remain, my dear lady, yours in Christian sympathy and affection, 'JOHN CLAYTON.'

The two following extracts are from letters written by well-known ministers, who were both, like Robert Philip, natives of Huntly, and descendants of the noble band of men 'whose hearts God had touched' by the rousing ministry of Mr. Cowie. The first,

from the Rev. George Legge, LL.D., of Leicester, was in reply to a request that he would preach the funeral sermon. After stating the unavoidable circumstances which prevented his compliance, he says:—

'Receive the sincere sympathy and tender condolence of one who appreciated his worth, and enjoyed his friendship. It is more than thirty years since I found him in London, when he took me by the hand, and to me he was always faithful and true; and I have suffered a loss which can never be made up. The whole church has suffered a loss, though I trust it will yet hear him in his works, by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

'Your loss of course cannot be measured, but you can look forward to a blessed reunion above. Though he did not live to a great age, he had accomplished more than most of his brethren; it was time that the workman should rest, and the warrior should receive his crown. Often had he "realized eternity," and now it is all his own, as an heir of God and joint heir with Christ. You have been supported in many a painful experience, and in this the most painful of all, and I trust you will have peace and comfort till the end crowns the work. Offer my best regards and sympathies to your family, and believe me, dear Mrs. Philip, yours faithfully, 'GEORGE LEGGE.

'LEICESTER, *7th May* 1858.'

The second is from Dr. Spence, of the Poultry Chapel, whose recent loss has been so deeply regretted:—

'Mr. Philip's name has been as a "household word" with me from my infancy, and my personal remembrances of him are sacred and pleasant. Now he rests from his labours, and is with the Master whom, by the grace given him, he served so lovingly, so faithfully, and so long.'

The following letter from the Rev. George Gilfillan, of Dundee, is interesting as containing the opinion of one who only knew him in his later years:—

'DUNDEE, *29th May* 1858.

'DEAR MADAM,—I read with sorrow the newspaper notice of the death of your departed husband. He was one for whom I always entertained a high respect, from some of whose writings I had derived much pleasure and benefit years ere I saw his face in the flesh, and from whom more lately I experienced much personal kindness. I desire to express my deepest condolences with you and your family under this distressing event. Man has no comfort to bestow either on himself or on his fellow: he can only give his sympathy; and what, alas! is it generally worth? From God only, and God's ministers, time, patience, and hope, can comfort spring. May these ministering angels hover over your roof and whisper peace!

'How well I remember my last dinner under your hospitable roof! Binney, Harris, George Mogridge,[1] and your husband were there; and now the first is

[1] George Mogridge, better known under his *nom de plume* of 'Old Humphrey,' was a frequent attendant on Mr. Philip's ministry.

wandering in search of health in the Antarctic regions, and the three last have gone a farther journey.

'They have met, I trust. The subject we talked of all the afternoon, was the spirit-world and its strange shadowy connection with ours. How much better do they understand that subject now! May it be ours, dear madam, in due time to "enter into rest," as they have done, and to rejoin them at a table still more hospitable, and still more plentifully furnished. —I am, dear madam, yours most truly,

'GEORGE GILFILLAN.'

These testimonies of affectionate regard would be incomplete without the addition of an extract from a letter, written by Mr. Philip's old coadjutor and long-tried friend, Thomas Thompson, Esq. :—

'HEATHFIELD, STOCKPORT, *4th May* 1858.

'MY DEAR MADAM,—I am sure I ought to sympathize with you in the removal of your long-loved associate from your companionship on earth, and indeed I do so; but you have even now said:

> "Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
> And stayed thy progress to the realms of bliss."

'He has realized the sweet home of the blessed, and joined in the conqueror's song with many who were instrumentally "guided" by him in the pathway to the society of the "spirits of the just made perfect." We shall both miss him from the domestic and the social, as I have long done from the public circle. It

seems a long time since we were labouring together at the missionary board, and with our pens and all our influence, for China, Africa, and the West—yes, and for British villages also. He rests from his labours; I am left behind. I have long sought for a kindred spirit; I have found a few somewhat like him, but the earnest, the persevering, the actively intelligent, the men of one purpose, and that purpose a world's recovery, I cannot yet secure. You need consolation, and you will obtain it from Him who is the husband of the widow.—Ever, my dear Mrs. Philip, yours in Christian esteem and fervent supplication,

'THOMAS THOMPSON.'

In estimating the results of his ministry, it should be borne in mind, that the change of style observable between his sermons in Liverpool, and those of his London pastorate, was not occasioned by accident or caprice, but by his own deliberate choice. After full consideration, he decided to relinquish the fleeting triumphs of rhetorical eloquence, for the more solid and enduring effects of thoughtful and experimental preaching. In a sermon preached in 1851, he thus explains it: 'I saw so much of the transitory effects of popular preaching during my early ministry, that I deliberately abandoned my first design of dealing chiefly with the feelings and imagination, in order that I might appeal to the understanding, that faculty of the mind which clever and thoughtful men prize most, and thus prepare myself for dealing with the perplexed and doubt-

ing about experimental piety.' The result abundantly justified the wisdom of his choice, and during his last illness it was a pleasing reflection to him, on reviewing his ministerial and literary labours, that he had nothing to regret or wish recalled, in any effort he had made to do good; and he cherished the hope that even after his death, his works might still be made useful in winning souls to Christ. It was in no spirit of self-righteousness or pride that he indulged this hope, for next to his unselfish devotion to his Master's service, was his feeling of profound personal humility.

To this he has given expression in his *Life of Whitefield.* 'Good and faithful servant,' is the last name of a Christian which he thinks of appropriating to himself. He is even more than content, he is grateful, if he can hope to escape the branding name, 'Wicked and slothful servant.' He well understands and approves what one of Whitefield's friends, a devoted servant of God, said on his deathbed: 'I have been throwing into one heap, all my bad works and my good works, and carrying both to the foot of the Cross.'

The reception which has been accorded to the republication of the *Experimental Guides*, and *The Eternal*, has fully realized his earnest desire for 'posthumous usefulness,' and proved that his influence as a religious writer is not yet extinct. It has been well remarked, in a review of the *Life of W. S. Landor* in the *Times*, 'that of all biographies, those of literary

men are the most difficult to write. To put upon paper an adequate life of any individual, is always a difficult task; but when there is a story of action to tell, or a series of incidents to narrate, the pages need not be dull, however far short the performance may fall of an ideal biography. But when, on the other hand, the life has been void of events; when the man has made no conquests but personal ones; when his achievements have been books, which are at once the incidents and their histories, the difficulty becomes very much greater.' It is certainly not diminished, when the chronicler is nearly related to the subject of his memoir, and brings to his work no other qualification, than an honest desire to present a faithful portraiture of his father's life and character.

In the hope that those who loved and esteemed Robert Philip for his work's sake (if there be any now surviving), will welcome this brief record, and that those who only knew him in his declining days, when his health was shattered and his work was almost done, may be enabled to form a more correct appreciation of his character and ministry, this memoir has been compiled, and with all its imperfections is now made public. Should this be realized, the compiler will be abundantly repaid for what has been to him not only a labour of love, but the discharge of a sacred act of filial duty.

J. K. PHILIP.

October 1st, 1878.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

IT must have occurred to the observers of the aspects of the present times, to have noticed the unusual number of books that are particularly addressed to young men. Many volumes of lectures addressed to this class of our population have been recently issued from the press. Our public speakers everywhere advert to their character, temptations, dangers, and prospects with deep solicitude; and all our benevolent societies that contemplate the moral and intellectual improvement of the race, regard them with peculiar and growing interest. Probably at no period of the world has there been so decided a reference to young men in public doings, as in our own times. The case of the young in general, has indeed always excited the attention of the moralist, and the friend of human improvement; but never before has there been so much anxiety evinced, to guard young men from the ways of sin, and to secure their aid in the cause of virtue.

Our own country has been more distinguished for these efforts than any other. Probably the best books adapted to this class of our population have been furnished by American writers. The reason is obvious. The growing importance of this portion of our community has been here more deeply felt than elsewhere. They take a more active and a more important part in public life, here, than in other countries. They come soonest on the stage of action, and their powers are more early called forth, in the boundless fields of enterprise that are opened in this land. If those powers are not brought under wholesome restraint, and subjected to pure moral principle early, it is felt that they will soon be beyond the reach of admonition and control; and in a country, too, where all offices are in the power of the people, and the character of a people will determine the character of the Government, it is felt that it is of unspeakable importance, that those who are soon to control the destinies of the nation, should be imbued with sound moral, political, and religious principles. In a Government where office and power are hereditary, the accession of one generation to the place of another, is a matter of much less importance than where all offices are elective. A few years hence, when young men are advancing on the stage of life, may essentially change the character of our institutions. All our offices will pass into other hands, and into hands, too, where the only security that a wise course of measures already in progress

shall be pursued, will depend entirely on the character of those who shall advance to take possession of the place of power. There is no titled nobility; there is no aristocracy; there is no privileged order, where the interest, and the very existence of the order, depend on stability, and where that interest would be a guarantee against change. All here depends on character. We can point to no other security; we have no other hope of stability and permanency in any of our institutions; we have no standing armies that can guard their permanency; we have no prejudice even in favour of any long-established order of things. All the prejudices and preferences in this country, tend rather to change and to revolution, to experiment, and to some more rapid and decided mode of attempting to advance the interests of the commonwealth. All the institutions which we so much prize, must be soon in the hands of those who are now young men. They will preside in our colleges and seminaries of learning; they will occupy our benches of justice; they will constitute the ministers of religion, the practitioners of the healing art, and the makers of the laws; they will fill the ranks of the most humble, and the most elevated employments. Somewhere in this mass of expanding mind, are now those who in a few years will occupy the seats of senators, and who shall be the presidents and governors of the Republic. At the present time their minds are receiving an impulse, that shall in a short time direct the destinies of this vast popula-

tion, and whose power shall be felt in the mighty plans and purposes that are to be developed in the New World.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the importance of this class of our population should attract increasing attention. Alike by the virtuous and the depraved, it is felt that every enterprise depends on their character. Bad men feel that their hope of success is there; and good men know that all they hold dear, must soon pass into their hands. Bad men originate plans of enterprise, that contemplate the co-operation of young men, and purposes of evil, that shall draw them from the ways of virtue; and good men feel the necessity of endeavouring as much as possible to counteract those efforts, and of enlisting their energies on the side of truth and piety.

It may be proper here, just to hint at some of the causes, why good men have felt so much solicitude in regard to the character and principles of young men. Some of those causes are the following.

The prevalent vices in this nation peculiarly assail them; and the arrangements which are made to propagate and extend iniquity, contemplate peculiarly young men. Atheists, and profligates, have little expectation of increasing their ranks from the aged. Age has few passions to which profligacy can appeal; and the opinions of age are usually fixed either for good or evil, so that the proselytism of decrepitude and years is at any rate of little value.

Let any one, therefore, look at the various allure-

ments of profligacy and sin, and he will find they are adapted designedly to secure and ruin young men. Our taverns and dram-shops depend mainly on their patronage. The numerous houses of licentiousness in all our large cities, depend mainly on them, and are sustained by them. Our theatres and places of amusement look to them, and without them could not be sustained. The army of drunkards is filled up from one generation to another, by a vast conscription, as Napoleon filled up the armies of France, from the ranks of young men. There is not a haunt of infamy throughout this land, that would not be closed at once, were it not for the support which is expected and received from young men. There would not be another opened and sustained in the land, could the efforts of the virtuous to lead young men in the right way be crowned with success.

There is a state of things in this land, which is tending rapidly to undermine the sober habits of this class of our community. Not only are their morals assailed, but the already far-extended and increasing spirit of speculation is gradually unsettling the foundations of virtue. Where there is the possibility of accumulating a princely fortune in a few years, or a few months, there will be an increasing reluctance to labour for a livelihood, in the manner that would produce a much more certain though slow return. The habits of frugality, economy, and slow acquisition, will be soon laid aside for the spirit of rapid gain without toil. As a consequence, the farm and

the mechanic's shop, and the counting-house will be abandoned. The wide fields of the distant West will be traversed in pursuit of gain; the paths of industry will be forsaken; the frugality and sober habits on which a father in humble life acquired a competence, will be despised. Small but certain gain, the sure result of honest industry, will be deemed unworthy of regard, and those plans only which promise immediate and ample results, will be judged worthy of attention. The mind will be turned away from the mild and gentle charities of life, from those things which go to adorn the character, and to lay broad and deep the foundations of future usefulness, to the insatiable thirst for gold. It will be well also if this does not become everywhere the ruling passion of the young men of this nation, and if they do not regard all the precepts which inculcate morals, piety, and the love of country, as subordinate to the great purpose of this life. Never before, in the prospect of sudden acquisition of wealth, were there such temptations to dishonesty and fraud, as are presented in this nation; never so great danger that all the barriers of virtue should be trampled down under the influence of this one raging and almost uncontrollable passion.

Besides, it cannot be denied that the hopes of sceptics and infidels are fixed on our young men. The opinions of aged men are fixed, and their conversion to infidelity is not worth the effort. Infidels feel that it is of little importance how aged men

spend the remnant of life; it is of immense importance to their cause, to poison the fountains of future influence, and to direct and control those, who in a few years shall have the destinies of the nation in their hands. Accordingly, it is believed that almost all the exertions which are made in this nation, to extend opinions hostile to the Christian religion, are made with a main reference to the rising generation. The facts which have been before referred to, also tend to the extension of scepticism and infidelity. It is for the present interest of every intemperate and licentious man, of every gambler and swindler, of every man guilty of profanity, fraud, or dishonesty, to be a sceptic, and to rid himself, if possible, of the rebukes of conscience, and of the belief that there is a God and a hereafter. No man can pursue a course of vice with any degree of comfort, until he has banished from his bosom the hateful attendants that accompany principles of virtue. Accordingly, the great mass of profligate and dissolute men of every rank, are sceptics or atheists; and every young man that becomes dissolute and abandoned, by the very fact, becomes also, usually in practice, if not in theory, an infidel. No good man can be an enemy of the Christian religion; it is the only religion on earth that demands universal virtue, and it is the only religion that will do anything to satisfy the inextinguishable desires of the immortal mind. Every good and virtuous man must desire to be the friend of God, and to live for ever in a better world; and the

Christian religion alone, reveals this to him as his future inheritance, and assures him of an immortality as lasting as the throne of God.

How can it be possible that a good man can be the enemy of that which has contributed more to the purity, peace, and comfort of our race, than all other causes and influences combined? And how can any one look, without deep concern, on the fact that so many minds that might have risen high in intellectual and moral worth, have early fallen under the blighting influence of scepticism, and there have buried all their brightest hopes, their self-respect, and moral greatness, and have wrecked all their prospects of happiness and usefulness for ever?

That there are many dissipated young men in this land no one can deny. That there are many sceptics, atheists, and profligates, many reckless of character, and regardless of God and man, it would be folly to attempt to conceal. But we may not be disheartened; nor should we give the enemy of virtue and religion an occasion of triumph. All are not profligates or infidels. Nor are the majority of them found in the ranks of infidelity and of sin. It is still true that the great mass of youthful mind in this nation is disposed to the ways of truth and soberness, of industry and virtue, and we would fain hope of religion also. Our young men are bold and vigorous, ingenuous and large-hearted. They will respond to any well-directed efforts to promote their intellectual advancement, their moral purity, and their salvation. Never was there a

nobler field in which to make an effort to secure their entrance in the paths of virtue; never was there a more cheering prospect of success. Every lover of his country must therefore hail with joy all efforts which are made to influence in this direction, so important a class of our population.

With reference to this great object, the following work will, it is believed, be received with renewed favour by the American people. The Rev. Robert Philip, the author, is well known in England, and his writings have been received with special marks of favour by the religious public in Great Britain. His *Guides* have been already extensively circulated in this country, and with undoubted expression of the approbation of the religious community. His writings are full of strong, original, manly thought. His manner is a fine illustration of the proper manner of treating the subject of religion. His style is manly, nervous, vigorous. He has clear views, and he expresses them lucidly and strongly. The truths which he presents are free from affectation and cant, and from the mere technicalities of religion. He writes like a man of strong sense, of liberal views and feelings, who feels impressed with the greatness and importance of his theme, and who is anxious only to convey his own views of the subject to the minds of others. He is free from mysticism, free from bigotry, free from all that would render his subject unacceptable to men of taste and refined sensibilities. His writings are such as I should wish to put into the hands of a candid

and ingenuous young man, as adapted, I should think, to exalt him to thought, to manly views of piety, and the great object of human life. The extensive circulation of this volume, particularly among young men, I should regard as a happy indication of the virtuous tendency of the rising generation, and as highly auspicious to the cause of pure and devoted piety.

ALBERT BARNES.

PHILADELPHIA.

MANLY PIETY.

CHAPTER I.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF BOTH WORLDS.

SHORT as the ordinary term of human life is, it is long enough to justify both the love and pursuit of knowledge, business, and happiness. Neither the shortness nor the uncertainty of our time in this world, should be allowed to embitter life, or to cloud its rational prospects. We belong to time as well as to eternity; and it is as much our duty to meet the fair claims of time manfully, as to meet the weighty claims of eternity manfully. It is no more a man's duty to think only or always of heaven, than it is an *angel's* duty to think for ever of the earth. Angels have both engagements and enjoyments *out* of heaven, as well as *in* it. Hence Paul says, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, *sent forth* to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' But whatever time or thought their duties on earth may require, their duties in heaven are not

neglected. They are interrupted whenever angels are 'sent forth' upon any errand of mercy; but that errand is itself just as truly an act of obedience to God as when they veil their faces in His presence, or strike their harps before His throne.

In like manner, the duties of life are as incumbent on us as the duties of godliness. We are as much bound to be industrious as to be devotional. It is, therefore, neither a sin nor a shame to feel within us the workings of an active and enterprising disposition in reference to this world. It is, indeed, both sinful and shameful to feel nothing else. Nothing can excuse or palliate the neglect of the 'world to come.' The neglect of it is madness as well as a crime. We ourselves could not think well of an angel who should prefer to be always *out* of heaven, even if out on errands of love only. Ministering to the heirs of salvation is, no doubt, very proper and pleasing work even for angels; but, as it is not the only work they are fit for or called to, and as it must come to an end when the world ends, no angel would be justified in setting all his heart upon it, nor in seeking his chief happiness from it. There is before him an eternity of higher and holier engagements; and therefore, however necessary or pleasant it may be for '*principalities and powers, in heavenly places*,' to learn '*by the church the manifold wisdom of God*,' he would not be a *wise* angel who preferred to be always 'sent forth' from his place before the throne. And he is certainly not a wise man who, because there is much to do in the

world, and because he likes to be doing it, dislikes or neglects to think and act for eternity. Into eternity he can carry nothing of all that he may gain on earth by worldly pursuits. He is therefore labouring for what he must leave for ever, forget for ever, perhaps *curse* for ever! 'For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

Such being the facts of the case, we are fully warranted to believe that the duties of life are as well pleasing to God in their own place and proportion as the duties of godliness. It would neither be manly nor godly piety to prefer a life of mere musing, however spiritual, to a life of alternate and blended diligence and devotion; for if angels do *more* than meditate and worship, it indicates sloth and weakness rather than high heavenly-mindedness to shrink from industry or to regret the necessity of labour.

It is, however, mental weakness as well as arrogant impiety to set up the claims of time against the claims of eternity. They only clash when they are *made* to clash. In themselves, they are neither incompatible nor inconsistent; in fact, they are intended and adapted by God to help each other. The cares of this world make the world to come desirable, and the glories of heaven make the glooms of earth tolerable. He, therefore, who lives only for time, levels himself with the beasts that perish. He may build a finer house than the beaver, and amass more stores than the bee, and travel farther than a bird of passage, and rival the butterfly in show, and the nightingale in

song; but if these things engross his soul and absorb all his time, his rational powers are let down to mere animal instincts, and the *results* of his life have no more relation to heaven than the songs of a bird or the pursuits of a beast. Is this manly?

Eternity does not, then, interfere with the fair claims of time. 'The world to come' does not interpose its glories or its terrors to hide or hinder the proper business of this world. Instead of this, the future lends and blends all its high authority to confirm the legitimate claims of the present, making idleness 'worse' than infidelity, hallowing domestic and social love, upholding the sacredness of person and property, and throwing open fields of usefulness to minds of all orders and to men of all conditions. Should not, then, the present do equal justice to the future, and time admit and honour the claims of eternity?

It is pitiable, even contemptible, to let the things which are temporal divert our whole attention from the things which are eternal! Were any man, under any pretence, to care nothing about the affairs of this life, or to do nothing but to mope and muse, we should despise him. Life is not too short for action, nor too uncertain for enterprise. All the faculties and the very form of man, as well as his wants, prove that he was intended for activity; he prostitutes as well as prostrates his rational nature, when in a world like this he loves nothing or lives to no purpose. The *sloth* of the forest and the *slug* of the garden reprove such a creature. Is this censure as deserved as

it is degrading? Is it the sober fact that a space of time and sphere of action confessedly narrow, have yet such strong claims upon our regard that it would be despicable to dispute or evade them? See, then, eternity throw open its interminable duration, its entrancing glories, its unutterable horrors, its unchangeable destinies. Shall time be allowed to hide these from us, or to hush up all concern about them? Where is our sensibility or our common sense, if the immortality of our beings engage none of our solicitude? A *mote* may blind the natural eye; but if a *speck* of time blind 'the eyes of our understanding' to the solemn realities of death, judgment, and eternity, our mental vision must be very weak or fearfully perverted. It is despicable indeed when we, who would not allow the vast and awful expanse of eternity to eclipse the speck of time, allow this speck to eclipse that infinite expanse, flushed as it is with radiant glories and kindling flames. There might be some excuse both for our taste and intellect if we cared too *little* about this world, and gave the great bulk of our time and thoughts to the world to come; but to give all to the former, and none, or next to none, to the latter, is utterly inexcusable and unspeakably paltry. Such a choice and such conduct even the devil must despise, however he may be pleased with the fools who persist in it.

Dr. Johnson has well said, 'It is only whatever gives the past and the future a predominance over the present that can raise us in the scale of *thinking*

beings;' if, therefore, the present predominate over both, we must ever *sink* on that scale. This is inevitable. There are, indeed, men who rise to the heights of philosophy and poetry by their familiarity with the past. The wisdom of ages is on their lips, and the wealth of history at their command. They are far-sighted in legislation, and all tact in literature. And, could time past return, they of all men would be best prepared to mingle with the mighty dead, and to accommodate themselves to the ancient forms and feelings of society. They would be at *home* with Plato in his taste, and with Homer in his patriotism, and Socrates in his sagacity. But as time past cannot return, this predominance of the past over the future is as irrational as the predominance of the present, because equally irrelevant to eternity.

I do not underrate such knowledge. He is no ordinary *thinker* who can amass and apply it. It is, however, no preparation for the society of angels, nor for the fellowship of the general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect. The mere antiquary, philosopher, or poet, however high in the scale of intellect, is low in the scale of wisdom if he can prefer an ideal communion with antiquity to real preparation for eternity. Besides, if it be noble to make all the lights of the *past* bear upon the present, either as beacons to warn or as lustres to beautify, it must be ignoble and unmanly to let in none of the lights of immortality upon the present. Why should they be excluded? The history of time is not so well authenti-

cated as the revelation of eternity. And if the fate of heroes or the fall of empires teach any useful lessons, surely the final destinies of the universe cannot be uninstructive. Gain by all means an acquaintance with former ages. A knowledge of what has been will enable you to appreciate what *is*, and thus operate as a check on personal vanity and political extravagance. It is, however, what *shall be*—that alone can prevent you from living for this world, or prepare you for the world to come.

This remonstrance against the neglect of eternal things, and the echoes to it which your own conscience returns, must not be silenced nor disposed of by your *intention* to look eternity fully in the face when you are older. That is an uncertain event; and if it were not so, it is an unmanly excuse. You are old enough to understand and to act upon the reasons for looking the claims of this world full in the face. You feel already that you have no time to lose, if you would improve your education or your condition; at least, you see clearly how much time and thought would be requisite in order to realize all that you desire. You ought, therefore, to despise all subterfuges. 'The world to come' is not a secret nor a mystery. There are, indeed, both secrets and mysteries which belong to it; but as a state of eternal bliss or woe, it stands out as palpably as the alternation of light and darkness in this world. Indeed, it is far more certain how your principles and character will determine your eternal state, than how they will fix

your temporal condition. You *may* fail to rise in this world without being to blame, but you cannot sink into hell but by your own fault. You may be disappointed, undeservedly so far as man is concerned, of settling down in the rank or the relationship which you set your heart upon, but you cannot miss heaven if you set your heart upon it. There is no *lottery* in eternal life, however temporal life may seem to be one.

In like manner, there is no such mystery about the way of salvation, as renders the experience of old age necessary in order to understand it. There are indeed mysteries in the plan of redemption, as well as in nature and providence; but it is not 'length of days' that clears them up. It may suit the convenience of the worldly, the idle, and the sensual, to pretend that they know not what to believe; but whilst they are so dexterous in evading what they ought to *obey* (about which there is no mystery), it will not be uncharitable to suspect that they see more clearly than they choose to acknowledge how the belief of the gospel would involve obedience. And what else are your evasions of the immediate claims of salvation and eternity but a betrayal of an unconfessed fact—that you know enough to render your indecision inexcusable? Yes, indeed; a glass that could concentrate into a *focus* all the rays of scriptural light which float and flutter around your understanding and conscience, and which should then throw the embodied blaze upon eternity, would startle you at your

smiling indecision. For you know that the everlasting song of heaven is redemption through the blood of the Lamb; and therefore to take no interest in that song until the evening of life is infamous. You know that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and therefore not to follow holiness until you come to the last stage of the journey of life is base cowardice, or baser rebellion. You know that, except you are born again of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and therefore not to pray for the promised and indispensable renewing of the Holy Ghost, or not to yield to His strivings, is both ingratitude and insult. And then, what aggravates the whole is, that you *expect* to enter heaven at last, although it be the *last* thing you now think about, and the *least* thing in your present estimate of happiness.

How would all this *tell* at the bar of God? When your disembodied spirit does take its place at His tribunal, it must give '*an account*' of both the deeds done in the body, and of all the motives from which they were done. Well, just try for a moment, how your present reasons for delay and indecision would bear *telling* in the presence of God. Perhaps they would not tell well even to your dearest friend. You could, of course, make out a case to them somewhat plausible and satisfactory; but could you submit it to God if you were before Him? I mean, if you were before His tribunal, beneath the visible glance of His omniscient eye, with all heaven around you, and the weight of eternity pressing on your spirit? Thus you

must give in your account! What, then, is the use of *getting up* an account to others, which cannot be given in to Him? You would not attempt to pass off upon your most intimate friend the explanations of your indecision which you would give to a person who knew less of your habits and spirit; and if your *heart* condemn you before them, 'God is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things.'

You may easily close this book upon this close questioning; but when God's '*books shall be opened*' on the judgment seat, you cannot close them. The recording angel that opens them, cannot shut them. All that you would conceal, or gladly forget, is registered in them, and will be read to you from them; and the only way in which you can be prepared to hear it all, without being overwhelmed by despair, is by setting your heart at once to seek for a personal interest in the great salvation you are now neglecting.

Perhaps you do not yet see clearly, how you could set your heart upon that salvation, without withdrawing it from everything else. But this is quite a mistake. The heart must indeed be withdrawn from whatever is sinful, but from nothing that is truly good or rational. The religion of the Bible has no *quarrel* with the beauties of nature or art, with the wisdom of science or literature, with musical taste or poetic genius; it forbids and denounces the pursuit of them as the chief good, but it does anything rather than tie or tame down the mind to despise them; in fact,

it exalts and purifies the mind, to enjoy whatever is lovely or useful, and ministers liberally to all that is manly in character, or noble in spirit, or laudable in enterprise.

'A Christian is the noblest style of man,' when he is a Christian indeed.

CHAPTER II.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF TRUE WISDOM.

THOSE who know best the number and character of the ancient systems of philosophy, which successively claimed and obtained the hallowed name of 'WISDOM' or religion, in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, will least wonder that Paul should brand them with the epithet '*foolishness.*' What else could any man call them, who could say of them (and defy contradiction whilst he said it), that '*the world by wisdom knew not God*'? That could not be wisdom, which left God unknown and immortality undefined. Nothing is religious wisdom, that is unable to make man wise unto salvation. Accordingly, no man in the present day who cares anything about his soul, would be so foolish as to take up with the religious opinions of Plato, Socrates, or Cicero. Even the infidel admirers of these splendid theorists, would laugh at any man who should adopt the creed of the wisest of these sages. It was not, therefore, too sweeping nor too severe a charge, when Paul called the wisdom of the wisest heathen foolish-

ness. He spoke, not of the *talents* of the ancient philosophers, but of the results of their application. The men themselves were anything but fools; they were the wisest men of their respective nations, and the master spirits of the world, in all things but religion. Some of them almost deserved the emphatic name given to them by their admiring scholars, '*myriad-minded men.*' Never, certainly, was more mind concentrated upon the study of wisdom. If 'searching' could have found out God, or unveiled eternity, they would have made the discovery. But Plato and Socrates failed; and '*what can the man do who cometh after*' these kings of intellect and imagination? Their systems fell before the gospel, like Dagon before the ark, although the arms of empires upheld them, and the glories of the arts enshrined them, and all the uninspired harps of genius vied in immortal song to immortalize them. All would not do! The world soon pronounced their wisdom foolishness, when God made Christ 'wisdom' unto man. And now, it would be as impossible to make men Platonists in reality, as to make them Druids. No system has even the appearance of wisdom now, but from the Christianity that is in it.

We have, therefore, no occasion to ask the old question, '*Where shall wisdom be found?*' for although, as in the time of Job, 'the depth and the sea' still say, 'It is not in me,' and although 'destruction and death' can only say, 'We have heard the fame thereof with our ears,' the Gospel says, 'It is in me,' and

proves the assertion true, by pointing to myriads whose character on earth, and whose place in heaven, demonstrate that they were made wise unto salvation, by applying their hearts to 'the wisdom which cometh from above.' Now, thus wise you desire and hope to be some time, and by the same means too; for you cannot imagine that the puny dwarfs of modern infidelity, can ever depose truths which the giants of ancient philosophy could not discover; nor can you dream of mightier minds arising to eclipse the reasonings or the research of 'the mighty dead.' They do not know the meaning of mind (or, with all their *talk* about the sages of antiquity, they have never studied them), who anticipate from the influence of Voltaire as a wit, or of Hume as a logician, champions of the light of nature, who may do for deism what the champions of philosophy could not do for it. The mind of the ancients as *mind*, like the sculpture of the ancients as art, can never be surpassed in power or splendour. Christianity has therefore nothing to fear, and infidelity nothing to hope, from 'the march of intellect.' The march of vice, or of mental vacancy, or of vanity, can alone facilitate the designs of sceptics and scorners. Christianity has nothing to dread or deprecate but *inattention* to her claims.

I have made these references to the ancients, not so much for the sake of the argument just hinted at, as for the *example* of attention and application to what was then deemed wisdom; and surely if these sages were fascinated and absorbed by mere *guesses* about

God and immortality, the perfect revelation of both deserves our attention. If they bent their mighty minds to the deliberate study of nature, until their hearts burned with the consciousness of power and pleasure, we may well apply ourselves to the study of redemption. Even angels 'desire to look into' it, as '*the manifold wisdom of God.*' No wonder! Redemption flowed from all the perfections of the Eternal Mind, and from all the sympathies of the Incarnate Mind. It is the fulness of the Father's grace, and the brightness of the Son's moral glory. It is the maturest plan of infinite wisdom, and the loveliest form of infinite benevolence. The silence of the past eternity was first broken by its announcement, and the echoes of the future eternity can never sleep for its celebration. The disclosure of the plan of salvation in heaven, drew around it as students of the glorious mystery, all the armies of heaven; and the successive revelations of it on earth, made the patriarchs forget their pilgrimages, the prophets their perils, the apostles and martyrs their tortures.

This is the wisdom which solicits our attention; and it *requires* as well as deserves serious and fixed attention. Neither cherubim nor seraphim, angels nor archangels, deem themselves equal to appreciate or understand it, without looking into it. The first created spirit, as well as the last glorified infant, bends from his throne, or burns in his orbit, with holy curiosity to comprehend its glories. Yes; and could all the varied knowledge of all the universe

be concentrated in one mind, even when all perfect minds are as powerful as the open vision of a completed heaven can render them, that mind would be studious still, and *first* in zeal and zest for continued and ever-increasing attention to this wisdom. Still, no wonder! Redemption by the blood of the Lamb concentrated the entire and intense energies of the Infinite Mind upon its principles and designs. Omniscience never wearies of watching its progress, nor Omnipotence of upholding its claims, nor Providence of making all things work together for its good. Emmanuel 'ever liveth to intercede for,' and the Holy Spirit to help, all who apply their hearts unto this wisdom.

Such being the character and claims of the wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation, its own glories might well be expected to win the heart by their own attractions, however the heart was naturally disposed in itself or solicited by other objects. That which thus draws and absorbs the adoring admiration of beings who need no redemption, ought to gain at once our confidence and love; for we *need* all the blessings of that great salvation which they so greatly admire. But, alas! we are capable of trifling with eternal redemption, and even inclined to shut our hearts against all its claims. The very utmost that, of our own accord, we are willing to do, is to promise that some portion of the evening of life shall be set apart to meditation and prayer. We have no natural inclination to '*number our days*' now, in order to

apply our hearts now to wisdom. When our days on earth shall be nearly numbered for us by a power we cannot resist or evade, we see no particular objection to weighing the claims of the gospel; but at present we hate the thought of death, and have no natural love to salvation. Whatever we think or feel at times differently from this, springs from *another* source than our own nature.

Look, then, at your instinctive tendencies. They are all *against* the eternal interests of your soul and the immediate claims of true wisdom. Even those tastes which are most intellectual and refined prefer human wisdom to Divine. This is as unmanly as it is ungodly. A heart thus averse to the great salvation ought to shock and shame you.

I am aware that it is easy to expose and upbraid this state of mind; and I know, too, that it is sometimes unnecessary to do so. There are moments when the mind is all thought, and the heart all feeling:

> 'The soul, at times, in silence of the night,
> Has flashes, transient intervals of light,
> When things to come, without a shade of doubt,
> In terrible reality stand fully out.
> Those lucid moments suddenly present
> Glances of truth as though the heavens were rent,
> And through the chasm of celestial light
> The future breaks upon the startled sight.
> Life's vain pursuits, and time's advancing pace,
> Appear with death-bed clearness face to face,
> And immortality's expanse sublime
> In just proportion to the speck of time:

Whilst death, uprising from the silent shade,
Shows his dark outline ere the vision fade;
In strong relief, against the blazing sky,
Appears the shadow as it passes by;
And, though o'erwhelming to the dazzled brain,
These are the moments when the mind is sane.'

JANE TAYLOR.

This is, however, but the *sanity* of moments. Such vivid realizations of death, could not be kept in habitual combination with real life or godliness. Indeed, they are the warning visions of the ungodly, and not the forms in which death or eternity presents itself to believers. You mistake egregiously, if you imagine that those who 'consider their latter end' are thus convulsed or overwhelmed by the prospect. No, indeed; those who, like Paul, 'die daily,' like him, enjoy life daily. Those who, like David, 'number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom,' are not terrified by night visions, nor thrown on the rack, whenever they realize 'the valley of the shadow of death.' These starts and storms are the portion of those who 'put the evil day afar off.' Those who bring it near enough for holy purposes, are not *haunted* by it; for the fear of death, like the keys of death, is under the *providential* government of the Saviour, and thus regulated by His wisdom, as well as alleviated by His grace. In a word, the fear of death is not *allowed* to embitter or sadden life, when life is consecrated to the service of God.

Were this well weighed, the real connection be-

tween the acquisition of true piety, and the contemplation of death, would cease to appear repulsive. I say the *real* connection between them, because it is quite different, both in kind and degree, from the relation you imagine them to bear to each other. When you think of piety, you immediately connect it with the fear of death; and thus the admission of its claims, seems to you the admission of a sad and settled fear of dying soon or suddenly, and the bare idea of this is so unpleasant, that to avoid it you evade the claims of religion. You see clearly that you must number your days if you would apply your heart unto wisdom; but you do not see how wisdom *cheers* the heart that is applied to it. Christians living as Christians do not live at the hazard nor in the suspense you do. You utterly mistake in imagining that, because they do not put the evil day afar off, nor forget their latter end, they thus make the world one vast valley of the shadow of death to themselves, or turn the lights of heaven and earth into sepulchral lamps, or interpret the harmonies of creation as voices from the tomb. No, indeed; this is neither the spirit nor the tendency of the wisdom which believers learn from Christ; its natural influence is to endear all that is good and lovely in life, and to 'turn the shadow of death into the morning' of a glorious immortality.

I tell you again, you are perilling your life by neglecting godliness. Whilst you stand afar off from the cross and the mercy-seat, you are upon ground

which Providence does not *watch* by pledge or promise. Even the *intercession* of Christ does not necessarily nor naturally extend to it. If the sweep of His golden censer, or the incense of His advocacy, embrace at all the *neutral* ground on which you linger and trifle, you cannot be sure that they shield *you;* nor can you think that they throw any protection over your life or pursuits whilst you place no fervent prayers in the censer of the Intercessor.

There is more implied in these facts than you imagine. Depend on it, there is a gross fallacy in your opinion, or a grand defect in the appeals which are made to you, if you suppose that death stands at the door of piety either to *alarm* or to *sadden* believers. The Saviour actually and officially keeps back the hand of death, that we may have *time* to apply our hearts unto wisdom; and He softens the aspect of death, that we may enjoy *composure* whilst trying to become wise unto salvation. It is not in order to confine our thoughts to death, nor in order to fix them upon the grave, that God binds us to 'number our days.' He calls for this consideration of our latter end for the sake of a far higher purpose, and of a far happier emotion. God takes no pleasure in human musings about mortality for their *own* sake; nor does He teach us to try to find pleasure in them. Death is a *curse,* and therefore the author of life and fountain of wisdom, teaches no such unnatural lesson as pleasure from contemplating death as death. What He teaches is, how the curse may be turned

into a *blessing*, and the natural fear of death blended with a hope full of immortality. It is all for the sake of that *wisdom* by which this is effected, that God calls or cares for the habit of numbering our days. He knows perfectly, and we too know well, that whilst we banish all thought of dying, we can banish all the claims of salvation; and that whilst we refuse to number our days, we shall not number our mercies nor our responsibilities, and therefore He teaches this *moral* arithmetic. Besides,—and I adjure as well as beg you to remember it,—the Gospel is the word of eternal life, and therefore it will only treat with man as an heir of eternity. It is not chiefly because we may not live *long* in this world that the Gospel is so urgent and authoritative in its appeals, but because we cannot 'live always' in this world. Eternity is inevitably before us! There is the real reason for pressing on us the duty of keeping in sight the end of time. God's object is not to vex, nor to pain, nor to terrify us, but to *inspire* us with the sublime consciousness of our own immortality, that we may spring up from the trammels of days and years to lay hold on eternal life. He wants man to be manly in godliness, and therefore He treats him as a man, and that with God-like solemnity and father-like tenderness; in a word, He as much consults our happiness when He sets us to number our days, as when He crowns our days with health and prosperity; for as the latter are intended to furnish us with opportunities of becoming wise unto salvation, so the former is intended

to enforce and secure the improvement of these opportunities.

Remember, then, the real connection of death with religion—Godliness hath the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come. To all of whom it can be truly said, 'Ye are Christ's,' God says, 'All things are yours, whether *life or death.*'

CHAPTER III.

MANLY FAITH IN PROVIDENCE.

OF all the proud boasts of sceptical philosophy, the most contemptible is the pretence that the greatness and grandeur of the universe render the affairs of this world, and especially of individuals, too insignificant to be regulated by a special providence. Because, forsooth, the solar system is immense and magnificent, and space as brilliant as boundless, sciolists argue that man is too mean to be an object of divine solicitude or of providential care. The men who talk thus profess to be influenced by lofty ideas of God, and by a sacred regard to His majesty. They say that it is both vulgar and presumptuous to imagine that the Great Supreme should notice little things, or interfere with the course of human affairs. It may be worthy of Him, they allow, to sustain the great laws of nature, and to superintend the universe as a whole; but to hear the prayers or heed the conduct of individuals, they deem unworthy of God. Thus they profess to exalt the Deity! There is, however, nothing so *vulgar* as this in all

the common notions of Providence. The language of this theory is fine, but the principle of it is coarse and the spirit of it mean, and its whole aspect more degrading to Deity, than the lowest notion of His providence which the weakest Christian entertains. For this theory confines the attention of the Eternal Mind to the *mindless* parts of creation, to masses and motions of mere *matter;* whereas the most vulgar theory of providence places God in the province of life and mind—a sphere which has some resemblance to Himself, and with which He can hold some rational intercourse or feel some natural sympathy. Suns and systems, and all the vast machinery of the universe, have no affinity with the divine nature, and no consciousness of the divine care; and, therefore, to make them the sole or the chief objects of Divine attention is to degrade God. They are, indeed, immense and magnificent; but in themselves they are as base as they are bulky, and as inert as they are innumerable.

How, then, can that be an exalted idea of God which confines His care and complacency to mere machinery, and excludes from both, beings capable of knowing and enjoying them? The grossest superstition was never so vulgar as this vapid refinement! Superstition has always and at least, represented the Infinite Mind as occupied about mind, and as subordinating matter to the improvement of spirits; and although sometimes too familiar, and at other times too fanciful in its details of Providence, it was never so brutish as to fill the heart or hands of Deity with

machinery. It remained for men calling themselves philosophers to do this; and most fully have they verified the apostolic proverb by it: '*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*'

This sarcasm is not too severe, even if these *refiners* regard every star in space as an inhabited world, and all the inhabitants as perfect beings. That is certainly a splendid conception, and as probable as it is sublime. It was most likely this view of the universe which compelled David to exclaim, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?' The holy amazement which breathes and burns in this exclamation, must be shared by every one who, like David, 'considers the heavens' in this light. The moment we vividly realize to ourselves a boundless universe, teeming with brighter worlds and higher orders of being, we begin to see their countless claims upon the notice of God, and to hear the sphered harmony of their worship, and to feel the superiority of their nature, and thus to find our own level. So we ought. It is, however, the brute's *level* which that man sinks to who concludes that God cares nothing about mankind; for it is just as likely that God should care for men as for angels. He 'humbleth Himself' when He condescends to 'behold the things which are in heaven,' as well as when He watches over the earth. The highest seraph is not so much above the lowest creature, as he is beneath the Creator. As, therefore, the Creator does condescend, even when He rules amongst the armies

of heaven, nothing can disprove His rule amongst the inhabitants of the earth; for there is no such difference between angelic and human beings, as to render the government or the guardianship of man unworthy of God. We are, indeed, utterly unworthy of such a Providence, and especially of such grace as He exercises on our behalf; but as both are exercised for the express purpose of training up human spirits to angelic perfection and eternal felicity, both are just as worthy of God, as is the moral government of the unfallen universe. Dr. Chalmers, if he has not exhausted this subject in his *Astronomical Discourses*, has embodied it in forms of power and glory, which fascinate equally the understanding and the imagination.

It is not, however, in this department of the question, that the disbelievers in a special providence unmask themselves fully; it is when *prayer* is proposed as the means of averting or mitigating the calamitous visitations of Providence. Then the disbelievers show themselves in their true colours, and meet the proposal with sneers or sophisms. I say the *proposal* for public prayer; for by the time that is carried into effect throughout the nation, the calamity that calls for it, has either created a public voice which drowns the hissing of sceptics, or made them 'believe and tremble.' The recent visitations of pestilence in this country had this effect. Whilst the cholera hovered on the confines of the land, or only swept through the lanes of vice and wretchedness, the witlings of the senate, and the leviathans of the

press, vied with each other in ribaldry and foolhardiness. Prayer and humiliation were put upon a level with the *hurdle fences*, which some one was said to have placed around his farm for protection. But when the crisis came, and 'the high places' of the earth, in common with the lowest, were perilous, and when the sound heart of the nation sent the nation to its knees, even infidels were awed into silence. Journals that had never named Providence before, except to ridicule it, *slipped* into their leading articles, from time to time, such admissions as betrayed their own alarm. The cravens of that crisis may choose to forget this fact, but history will not forget that they trembled quite as much as the men who fasted and prayed then.

Fears, I am fully aware, do not establish facts, however they may illustrate them. Let us, therefore, look at the argument against the use of prayer, as it is put forward, before the flutterings of the heart make the lips falter, or the spirits sink. Its validity, if it be valid, should not be judged whilst its authors are almost frightened out of their wits by physical danger. Well, it is this, 'that as famine, pestilence, and all kinds of peril have of course *natural causes*, their removal or mitigation in answer to prayer would involve a violation of the great law of nature.' This is really great nonsense; but as it is called philosophy, and is sometimes gravely treated by true philosophers, we must, I suppose, notice it.

Now, certainly, a violation of the great-laws of

nature is a very solemn matter. But what law (great or little) of nature requires to be altered or relaxed even for a moment, in order to make room for the influence of prayer? When prayer is for life or health, there may be *moral* causes why God should not vouchsafe to answer it; but there can be no *natural* causes to prevent Him, even when the atmosphere is charged with pestilence. Even then, He has no occasion to neutralize the natural effluvia that floats around us, nor to direct its currents from our path, in order to preserve us; He has only to will the continuance of our *moral probation*, as 'space for repentance,' or as opportunity for service, and life is sure, the end is gained, without touching a law or a wheel of the universe. It is not by any, nor by all, these laws that the soul is immortal or accountable. *Moral* laws alone can affect the term of its probation; and if they require it to be either prolonged or shortened, nothing in the course of visible or invisible nature can prevent it. The probation of the man and the course of nature go on together. Thus all that requires to be done, in order to the continuance of life, is to continue the soul as a candidate for eternal life; then disease, however prevalent or pestilential, can no more dislodge the probationary spirit, than it infects the angelic spirits who move and minister amongst the death-beds of the heirs of salvation.

This, I am aware, is argument only to those who believe the *revealed* responsibility and probation of man. With those who do not, it will go for nothing.

True; but it makes their assumption of the Christian name, and their protests against the name infidel, *go for nothing* also! Thus, if it prove nothing *to* them, it proves much *concerning* them. It does not convince them of the truth as it is in Jesus; but it *convicts* them of hypocrisy in pretending to pay homage to Christianity, and thus unmasks to you the men who mock at prayer and equivocate about Providence.

Those secret disbelievers who have discernment enough to see this, and *selfish* reasons for evading detection, shelter themselves under the acknowledged cessation of miracles, and parry off argument from general principles, by asking whether we expect God to work a *miracle* for our preservation when we pray in times of danger? This also is a paltry subterfuge! There is nothing but empty *sound* in the talk about the natural connection between cause and effect, when life is perilled by peculiar diseases. In some states of the atmosphere, the cause of disease is equally present to all who are under the same meridian; but it does not produce the same effect, even upon all who are of the same temperament and habits. One is taken, and another left. Some die, many suffer, and more escape. Now, although it would be unwise to call the escape of the many a *miracle*, it is unquestionably in consequence of the natural effect not following the natural cause, in their case. They inhaled unhurt, or with little injury, the same air which proved fatal to their compeers in age and circumstances.

The Christian ascribes this exemption of the many

to a special providence, which spares them for the probation of grace or of glory, and thus he gives both a sufficient and sublime reason for the event; but to what can the infidel ascribe it? He has no general principle to resolve it into, which can explain it. His great general principle, that cause and effect follow each other inevitably and invariably, it gives the lie to, so far as life and death are concerned. And as to what is called accident and chance, these are things which, however he may talk of them, in order to avoid answering awkward questions, are as incompatible with his system as miracles, or an extraordinary providence.

Dr. Chalmers has grappled with the infidel philosophy of our time, on this subject, in his own powerful and eloquent manner, and the substance of his argument may be thus embodied :—

'Observation carries us a certain way along the chain of causes and effects; but above our loftiest ascent there are other phenomena which we vainly try to reach. So it is in all philosophy. After reaching the highest ascertainable causes, there are others still higher which distance all our powers of research, and a wide region beyond all our investigation, of which we can positively say nothing. It may be under the control of higher beings in the universe; or nature may be like a chain of which a few lower links are visible, but the upper link of which is appended to the throne of a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. It may be by a responsive

touch at a higher part of the chain than is within our observation, that prayer meets with its answer. It is not amidst the seen and visible causes where it would be a miracle, but by an unseen though not less efficient touch amongst the remote and occult causes, that God answers prayer. If it be in the latter way, there may well be a Providence, as special as the wants of His dependent family, without at all infringing on the constancy of the course of nature. If the responsive touch were given within the sphere of observation, then the answer would be a miracle or a contravention of the known laws of nature. But if it be without the sphere of observation, then the answer may be as effectual, without any violence to any sequence of visible nature. The reaction of the answer strikes at a higher part of the chain than we see,—not by visible movement in the *experimental* region below, but by an invisible movement in the transcendental region above. It is there that the Supernal Power of the universe, the Cause of causes, puts forth an influence which is propagated downwards to the lowest extremity of the chain; and thus He carries forwards events in answer to prayer without disturbing the visible mechanism of nature. It is thus we live under the care of a presiding God, and yet amid all the regularities of a harmonious universe.

'But instead of treating it as a general argument, let us take some individual examples. When the sighing of the midnight storm sends a fearful agitation into the mother's bosom, as she thinks of her

sailor boy, tossed on the tempestuous deep, the advocates of a hard and inflexible constancy in nature would forbid her to pray. According to them, prayer to the God who holds the elements in His hand, is as useless as to the elements themselves. Yet nature strongly prompts her aspirations for the safety of her boy; and if our argument be true, there is nothing in science to repress them. God can answer her not by interfering with second causes, or reversing the changes of the heaving atmosphere, but by a touch of His hand amidst the deep recesses of meteorology. Thus He might bid the elements into silence. A virtue passes out of Him, which passes onward from the invisible to the visible.'

This is emphatically meeting the objectors on their own ground, and foiling them with their own weapons, for they hold no philosophical ground or weapons, if they refuse to admit that even science sees only the lower links of the chain of cause and effects. And yet, after all, this splendid and profound argument just comes to this, 'that nothing is impossible with God.' Thus the real philosopher and the real Christian meet at the same point and rest on the same principle.

To those, however, who believe Christianity (and no one does so who disbelieves the redemption of sinners by the atonement of the Lamb of God), the reign of grace presents both the most satisfactory proof and explanation of a special providence; for without such a providence as can prolong life and

preserve health, for all the purposes which God is covenanted to carry on in the world by the instrumentality of the church, there could be no moral nor natural security for the reward of Christ, or the salvation of man. Life, health, and reason must have some providential securities, if men are to be *trained* up for heaven, and heaven eventually peopled from the earth. All the laws of nature must be subordinate at all times to the designs and laws of grace, so far as grace requires *time* and *opportunity* to do its work on the heart and character. Now, neither that time nor that opportunity is provided for to a certainty, by the course of nature. Much of both is, indeed, certain from the order and uniformity of that course, but not enough without providence. Pestilential vapours generate from time to time, and spread so widely, that, if they wasted life or health according to the abstract law of cause and effect, a city, yea, a nation, might perish in a day!

It is, then, a *mediatorial* providence we live under; and its great object is to promote the designs of the Gospel. As sure, therefore, as you are under the Gospel, you are also under both the care and correction of a special providence. You can neither sin with impunity, nor suffer by accident. Your own history illustrates and proves this already. Yes, you have met with some checks or chastisements which made you feel, if not confess, that the eye of God had been upon your heart and habits. Certain trials were no *mysteries* to you, whatever they seemed to others.

You had a key to their secret cause, and knew well the real connection between your sin and your punishment. In fact, you suspected at times, how certain lines of conduct would end, and were not so much surprised at the issue as you were pained by it.

You are not singular in this experience. All smart, more or less, for their misconduct, however few acknowledge the retribution; and if you will keep your eyes open and fixed upon the discipline of Providence, as it goes on in the church of God, you will often be struck with the peculiar suitableness of certain dispensations, to the character of certain individuals. This may be frequently seen even in the world; but in the church it is always seen. There a process is for ever going on, which answers in a great measure all the practical purposes of the ancient miraculous gift of 'discerning spirits;' character finds its level, and principles their test, and thus men are brought out in their true colours in the long run, by the Ithuriel touch of a discriminating Providence. Only wait and watch, in the case of those who cloak sin or selfishness under the garb of religion, and you are sure to see them exposed or improved eventually, by 'the mighty hand of God,' for *their 'sins will find them out.'*

My own attention was drawn early to this maxim, and often and awfully have I seen it verified. Truly did Christ say, 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire.' 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, my Father taketh away.'

CHAPTER IV.

MANLY VIEWS OF DIVINE INFLUENCE.

THEY little know what they complain of, who are displeased when they are told, that they cannot become wise unto salvation without Divine teaching. The necessity of this is certainly a reflection upon the powers of the human mind; but it is also a refuge from the passions of the human heart, which, the more they are crossed, the more craving and clamorous they become. Whilst, therefore, the heart is set upon any sinful indulgence, or averse to moral restraint and devotional feeling, no degree of mental power could elevate the soul to 'the *love* of the truth as it is in Jesus,' however far it might raise the soul towards the *meaning* of that truth.

Besides, there is nothing really *strange* in the fact, that nothing but Divine power can give Divine truth the force of truth upon the human character, or produce the love of it in the human heart. This is, indeed, a melancholy, but not at all a surprising fact. What else could be expected in a world where all

hearts are naturally set against moral restraint and spiritual exercises? The very *arts* and *sciences* would require Divine power to teach them effectually, if they involved as much holiness and devotion as the Gospel. Yes, did mathematics demonstrate the evil of sin, and the necessity of holiness, just as the Cross of Christ does, *problems* would soon be as unpopular as the doctrines of the Cross. Were there no progress to be made in astronomy, without as much *prayer* as watching, there would be but few astronomical students. If geology and botany required, as Mount Zion does, '*clean hands and a pure heart*,' from all who ascended their hills, neither the strata nor the flowers of the earth would have many visitants. And if music could never be well played but when there was '*melody in the heart unto the Lord*,' or when worship was its only object, music with all its charms would have but few votaries. Even *place* and *power* in the state would not be objects of general ambition, if they could only be obtained by spirituality of mind, and only retained by consecration to the glory of God. In a word, were the practical and devotional requisitions of the Gospel, transferred from the Gospel to any trade or science, there would be just as much aversion to that trade or science as there now is to the Gospel, and as much necessity for Divine influence to enforce their claims; for it is not the mystery of a revelation from heaven, nor the mysteriousness of what is revealed, but the *design* of it all, that is offensive to human nature. We are naturally fond of the mys-

terious, when it does not interfere with our comfort; and, therefore, it is only a pretence to mask disinclination, when mystery is pleaded as an excuse for unbelief or indecision. It is '*a lion*' only in those ways which men dislike to walk in.

Thus it is not so much the weakness of our natural faculties, as it is the worldliness and carnality of our affections, that renders the work of the Holy Spirit indispensable. It is therefore almost a useless, if not also a foolish question, to ask, How much could a man learn from the study of the Scriptures without any Divine teaching? For what if he could acquire by dint of application the true meaning of the Bible, it could not benefit his soul, so long as his heart hated what his understanding comprehended. No knowledge of heavenly things could overthrow the supremacy of earthly things, in a mind that preferred earthly things. Great knowledge might counterbalance a little, his worldliness, by embittering some of his enjoyments, and embarrassing some of his movements, but it could not change his heart, whilst he was unwilling to exchange an earthly for a heavenly portion. The real form of the question ought therefore to be, How much will a man learn of truths which reprove and pain him, and which he therefore dislikes? And you can answer this question from your own experience. Like yourself, he will not try to learn much except when some fear of perishing prompts him to search the Scriptures.

In thus disposing of this question, I do not forget

that masterly defences of Christianity have been written by men who never prayed for the illuminations of the Holy Spirit; some even by men who did not believe that there was such a Spirit. These works are, therefore, proofs of what can be done without His teaching. They are, however, easily accounted for, by the *premiums* of fame or rank which, in a Christian country, await the triumphs of talent and learning. There is no aversion in the human mind to write *down* a rival system, nor to write *up* an endowed system. That study of the Scriptures which qualifies a man for such public controversy, does not involve secret devotion nor a supreme desire to glorify God. It can begin in ambition, and go on in pride, and at last leave the writer more earthly-minded than it found him. It is, therefore, only another proof of the necessity of Divine teaching in order to our becoming '*wise unto salvation.*' We may without the Spirit become wise unto fame, or wise unto wealth, or wise unto victory, in polemical questions of great public interest; but wise unto salvation we cannot become, apart from the agency of the Holy Spirit, because neither talent nor study can, by themselves, produce love to God, or conformity to the image of Christ. And what is any degree of religious knowledge worth to its possessor, if it leave him estranged from the love and likeness of God and the Lamb?

Remember, it is *principles* you need; and they cannot be acquired, apart from the influences of the Spirit. Notions may be acquired without His help,

but they can do little for you in time, and nothing for you through eternity. Accordingly, what benefit have you derived from the vague knowledge you possess of the Gospel? You are not utterly ignorant of it, nor altogether indifferent about it, and yet its promises do not gladden your heart, nor its principles regulate your life, nor its glorious prospects soften the aspect of death or brighten the aspect of eternity. Thus it is, in fact, no Gospel to you as yet. It might, indeed, be mere *law*, for any comfort you obtain from it. It is, however, 'glad tidings of great joy,' and this is the *knowledge* of it which the Spirit teaches. This is what you have not learnt, and what you cannot learn without being 'taught of God.'

Consider this fact. You quite mistake if you imagine that the Gospel has no other *design* upon you, than to restrain and regulate your character. It has that design upon both your heart and life; but it has also an express regard to your happiness. Yes, to your immediate as well as your eternal happiness! You are not happy. I do not mean that you have no enjoyments; I mean, that you cannot enjoy yourself when you think of God. You are obliged to forget Him, whenever you try to enjoy yourself; and that not only when you seek happiness in the pleasures of sin, but also when your pleasures are both rational and harmless. Even then, you are glad to keep clear of all recollections of God, lest they should spoil your enjoyment. And as to recollections of eternal things, they actually embitter the sweetest cup of your plea-

sure, whenever they intrude themselves. And call you this happiness? Can you think, even for another moment, that you understand the Gospel, or that you can understand it without the Spirit, whilst you regard the God of love in this light? What a perversion of language, to call that enjoyment, which can be spoiled and dispersed by recollections of the glory and grace of Jehovah! It is such another contradiction in terms, as saying that the sun spoils a landscape, or that the moon disfigures a sea view.

I tell you again, you do not understand the Gospel; for God, as it reveals Him, may be recollected with joy, in connection with every pleasure and pursuit which is not criminal, and realized without pain or embarrassment in every scene and circle which is not vicious. 'He that loveth not God, knoweth not God: for God is love.' Away with the low and unmanly notion that God is merely a jealous spy, or a harsh judge upon human happiness. He grudges no enjoyment but what is sinful, and frowns on no pleasure but that which displaces Him in the heart, and thus perils the soul. His supreme object is to glorify Himself by promoting our happiness.

Do not say, in answer to this, 'That is, if we seek our happiness in meditation, and in prayer, and in doing good, God will promote it.' That is not all; nor is it a fair representation of the fact which it professes to describe. Meditation, and prayer, and obedience, are not exactly what they now seem to you. You are judging of them as mere abstract and

absolute duties which trench on time and clash with convenience. You are looking at them only in their connection with this life, and overlooking their connection with eternal life. This is not fair. Do not, however, mistake me. I do not mean that the light of eternity, as you now view eternity, would materially alter your opinion of duty or devotion. You do not understand the Gospel sufficiently yet to look revealed eternity fully in the face. It is to you, as yet, what God seems to you, an object of dread rather than of admiration. How, indeed, could either be otherwise, for all the heed you have given to them?

But to the point. I defy you to make out, even to yourself, anything like a proof that the glad tidings of the Gospel, as they are found in the Bible, could not make you *happy* now. You may make out a case against devotion, which, in the present state of your mind, would convince you that prayer and watchfulness could not be pleasant. But were you an infidel, or even an atheist, I would openly and calmly defy you to prove the glorious Gospel to be *unpleasant.* For, could it be proved to be *untrue* (which it cannot), even that would not alter nor affect the truth of the grand principle on which it rests. Be not surprised at this assertion. Nothing can disprove that eternal happiness would be an infinite blessing. The truth of this does not depend on the truth of anything else. This would be true even if there were not a soul in man, nor a God in the universe. There could not in that case be, of course, eternal happiness, in point of

fact; but, in point of theory, it would remain incontrovertibly true, that eternal happiness would be an infinite blessing. Now, it is upon this independent fact, which no man in his senses can either deny or doubt, that the Gospel *founds* its claims upon the attention and love of all men. It argues with no man about his *likes* or *dislikes* of duty and devotion, until it has offered him a boon which he cannot *dislike*, however he may try; for it is absolutely impossible even to find fault with eternal happiness. So it is to be reconciled to eternal misery; both may be disbelieved or forgotten, but neither can be despised. God has taken care to render that impossible. Accordingly, it is not heaven itself, but the *way* to it, that you dislike. It is not hell itself that you care nothing about when you are careless of your soul. It is not, therefore, the Gospel in its final results that you can make out a case against, but the Gospel in its initiatory and intermediate demands. You can no more hate heaven than you can love hell, however much you may hate the narrow way which leadeth to everlasting happiness.

Here, then, is the point at which the Gospel itself meets you, with its practical and devotional claims. God is fully aware that you do not love them, nor see how they would conduce to your happiness. He wants you, however, to love them; and therefore He presents to your view, and offers to your acceptance, what you cannot dislike, even if you were to set yourself with all your might to try to dislike it; for it is

nothing else and nothing less than certain escape from the wrath to come, and eternal happiness in the presence, favour, and image of God and the Lamb, in company with all the unfallen and restored spirits in the universe. Now it is prayer, as it secures this portion; watchfulness, as it meetens for this inheritance; duty, as it prepares for this society, that the Gospel urges and enforces; and when the claims of eternity are fairly weighed, the claims of duty and devotion will be fairly met. The latter cannot be evaded, when the former are duly and daily considered.

What think ye now of the necessity of the work of the Spirit? Can anything but Divine power bring eternity so home to your habitual consciousness, that aversion to duty *must* fall before its august presence? Do you not see and feel that both the first and final appeals of the Gospel are founded upon *invisible* realities, which can only be vividly realized with delight, by a mind divinely aided and influenced? In a word, look at the whole mass of your natural and acquired distaste for eternal things, and then at the utter improbability of its giving way of its own accord, and then at the absolute necessity of its overthrow, before you can love divine things, and say, 'Is it not an infinite mercy that the help of the Holy Spirit is promised in answer to prayer, and in connection with searching the Scriptures?' Who would not place himself under such a teacher as 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation'? Sitting at His feet,

to become wise unto salvation, is almost as sublime, and quite as useful, as meeting Him on the mount of vision was, when prophets were His scholars, and prophecies His lessons.

Perhaps it may now be well, before entering upon the still more special work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, to prove to you the *reality* of His teaching; I mean, that He does teach now. You remember the promise, '*They shall all be taught of God.*' Well, be not surprised when I say that this promise is literally fulfilled in the case of all true believers. They may seem to you, at first sight, to have learned very *different* lessons; for they are certainly very much divided in sentiment amongst themselves. Hence arises the question, How can they all be taught of God? He surely does not teach one to be a Calvinist and another to be an Arminian, nor one to be a Churchman, and another to be a Dissenter; and yet the pious of both parties are taught by the Spirit! How is this?

Look first at the grand points in which they all fully agree. All the truly pious are of 'one heart and one mind,' as to the *way* and the *design* of salvation by grace. They all unite in perfect harmony around the Cross, and before the mercy-seat. Now, what could produce this union of sentiment and feeling, but Divine teaching? What better proof could be given that they have all been in one school, and under one Master? For, remember, this agreement in the NEW SONG is not confined to one nation; but

in every nation, all who really believe in Christ, believe the same things concerning Christ, and for the same purpose too.

And now, as to what they differ about, the fact is, there has been no Divine teaching on either side, when the Scriptures have not been allowed to speak for themselves. The Spirit leads only into all *revealed* truth.

Personal religion is, however, my subject. Now, when the Scriptures affirm the absolute necessity of 'a new heart,' and call the change '*regeneration*,' they do not speak in the language of the world, nor according to the natural opinions of mankind; and yet they forbid us to reckon the doctrine of the new birth strange. '*Marvel not* that I say unto you, Ye must be born again.' The Saviour expressed surprise as well as censure, when Nicodemus attempted to mystify the subject, and thus to evade its claims: 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?' That there is mystery in the *mode* of Divine operations on the human mind, the Saviour not only did not deny, but also asserted it in unqualified terms: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

After these explicit assurances from the lips of Him who is both our Saviour and our Judge, it would be equally unmanly to overlook the mystery, or to dispute the necessity of a divine change on the heart. Both

are asserted by the same high authority, and therefore ought to be treated with the same holy reverence. This is not done, however, when the declared mystery of the mode of spiritual operation, is turned into an excuse for neglecting to pray for 'the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' That 'washing of regeneration' ought to be prayed for with as much simplicity of heart, as when we ask for our daily bread, and with infinitely more solicitude. There is mystery in the way in which our food nourishes our natural life; but who ever rejected or neglected food, because he could not explain the process by which it sustains the body? It does prolong life, and renew strength; and therefore every sane man uses it, and every good man prays for it. In like manner, it is the fact that the word of God, when duly weighed and prayed over, is blessed by the Spirit of God to the renovation of the soul. No man ever imitated David in hiding the word of God in his heart, and in praying for a new heart, without finding, in his own experience, the truth of the promise: 'A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'

I have already stated that we are solemnly warned against *marvelling* at the necessity of a change of heart. And no man can look at heaven in the purity of its enjoyments, or in the spirituality of its engagements, and 'marvel' that he must be 'born again' in

order to enter the kingdom of heaven. This is no more a wonder than that an ignorant man is unfit to fill the chair of Newton, or a weak man to guide the helm of a free nation. Both the place and the pleasures of eternal life render the renewal of the soul as necessary, as they render the resurrection change of the body indispensable. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' Accordingly, no one marvels that this mortal body 'must put on immortality,' before it can take its place in heaven. We both admit and admire the necessity of having this 'vile body' changed and fashioned into the likeness of 'Christ's glorious body.' We feel instinctively that its present weakness, and especially its grossness, are incompatible with 'an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' And is not a corrupted soul as unfit for heaven, as a corruptible body? If the latter must 'bear the image of the heavenly,' surely the former cannot do without it. Marvel not that ye must be born again, in order to inherit the kingdom of God! You yourself feel that if your body were to rise from the grave unchanged, your soul, if holy, would shrink back from all reunion with it, and prefer to be 'unclothed' for ever, rather than to be again imprisoned in such a clay tabernacle; and I tell you plainly, that were your body to rise from the dead 'fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body,' it would as instinctively shrink back from reunion with your soul if your soul were unholy. Wonder not, therefore, that both must undergo a Divine change before they can enter heaven.

A matter which can thus be brought home to our common sense, is not likely to be without analogies in our common nature. You may not have noticed yet, with an express reference to this subject, how much the heart can be changed for a time, by the mere force of circumstances. There are, however, both moods and emotions, common to man, which prove that the heart may be brought into full harmony with the mind and will of God. Many providential events bring men to the very brink of acquiescence in all that God requires; and were the feeling of the moment followed up by consideration and prayer, full acquiescence would be the effect of these dispensations.

Have you ever lost, by death, a beloved parent, brother, or sister? Remember the state of your heart whilst stunned or melted by that bereavement! You had no occasion to try experiments, nor to take measures, in order to feel as the rest of the family felt. The loss affected you at the same time, and in the same way, that it did others. Your spirits sank, your heart melted, your whole soul quivered with deep emotion. You may have *wept* less than some of the family did; but you did not feel less, when you *gazed* the last look upon the face you were to see no more 'until the heavens and the earth were no more.' You had your full share in all the real suffering which pervaded the domestic circle, when you first met that circle after the final interview in the chamber of death. For the time, all worldly recollections passed away from your mind. You could not have planned

nor executed any earthly enterprise, however profitable or tempting. Whatever was the absorbing subject of public attention at the moment, you were almost insensible to its very existence, and too much absorbed at home, to have any personal sympathy with it. Your thoughts and feelings were concentrated upon the breach, the blank, made in the family circle! You saw so clearly and felt so keenly how life, and health, and reason depended on the will and power of God, that you could neither doubt nor wonder that *salvation* should depend upon His good-will. In a word, you were 'almost persuaded to be a Christian,' whilst the infinite importance of being 'altogether' a Christian lay before you in the strong light of death, judgment, and eternity. Thus God '*maketh the heart soft*' in the day of bereaving visitation. In such a scene, even Hume burst into tears and exclaimed, 'Oh that I had never doubted!' Now, although all this do not amount to a *spiritual* change of heart, it was a moral change which, while it lasted, corresponded with the providential dealings of God with your family; and still it is both proof and illustration to you of the possibility of having your heart brought as fully under the power of the word of God by His Spirit, as it was then under the power of His rod by His providence. For if such be the force of *circumstances* when they are solemn and painful, what may not the force of eternal truth effect on the heart when accompanied by the gracious influences of the Eternal Spirit? This is the point on which I would now concentrate

your attention. Add, if you will, to the tender and intense emotions I have just recalled, all the deep emotions you have ever experienced. You have been very ill at times, and your heart was softened then. You have had some signal escapes from imminent danger, and your heart melted then. You have witnessed scenes of woe and suffering, and your sympathies overcame you. You have even been dissolved in tears by reading a tale of deep interest; and, amidst the solitudes of nature or the grave, you have mused until your spirit was in full communion with all the aspects and associations of the scenery. Well, to all these fine emotions I make my appeal. You justly regard them as manifestations of good taste and right feeling, and thus as proofs that you are not heartless or frivolous; so do I. Such sympathies and sensibilities identify you with all who can think and feel. No mind can reach *manhood* without them. I appeal, however, to what you have felt under the pressure of affliction, or in the presence of suffering, or amidst the silence and solitude of impressive scenes, in order to show you what you *may* feel and *ought* to feel under the disclosures and overtures of eternal life.

Now you would be ashamed of yourself if you had not wept when the family grave was open, if you had not softened when the mighty hand of God brought you low, if you had not yearned with sympathy when real and heartrending suffering fell under your notice; and is it no shame to be unmoved by the

curse of a broken law? no shame to be unmelted by the atoning sufferings of the Son of God? no shame to be heedless about that 'holiness without which no man shall see the Lord'? Judge righteous judgment! I will not call your sensibility vapid sentimentalism, nor your sorrows selfish, because they terminate upon earthly things; but I will, I must say that it is as unmanly as it is ungodly to be *unfeeling* whilst your immortal soul is in peril, and your eternal all in jeopardy. This admits of no apology or palliation; it is equally weak and wicked, as intellectually mean, as it is morally base. You yourself despise this heartlessness, and denounce such heedlessness when they trifle with temporal interests or with human sorrows. You could not think well of any man, whatever were his rank in science or society, who could treat his lowest friends as you have treated your God and Saviour. I refer now not to your sins, nor to your shortcomings, but to the sheer trifling with salvation which you have indulged. Your soul might need neither mercy nor grace, from the way you have treated it, or mercy and grace might never have cost the Saviour a tear nor a groan, from the way you have treated them.

This will not do! You must be born again; all the character of God and heaven must change for the worse, if you could be safe for eternity without a change to the better. You as much need a new heart now, as you will need an immortal body at the resurrection; and *you* are not the person, whoever may be

so, to shelter yourself under the question of Nicodemus, '*How can these things be?*' The spiritual change you need *can be*, just as the moral changes I have mentioned have been. You can neither deny nor doubt the power of providence to *soften* your heart, and therefore you cannot question the power of grace to *sanctify* it. You have been moved, melted, penetrated by what God has *done;* and as He has *said* greater things in His word, than any He has done by His rod, greater impressions and improvements may, under the blessing of His Spirit, be produced by them on your heart and character.

Do not evade the point of these questions by asking whether the renewing work of the Spirit, like the softening work of providence, renders 'the world a blank, business a burden, and amusement hateful.' You know that it does not. My design can only be mistaken wilfully, can only be misrepresented wantonly. Nothing is farther from it (and the inmost voice of your conscience tells you so) than to convey an idea that you must be thrown by the work of the Spirit into the same agitation, or into the same depression, or into the same deadness to the world, which you felt during the paroxysms of pain or grief. It is not for this end the Spirit of God works, not in this way that His influences operate; I mean, it is not to produce a *continuance* of painful emotions or low spirits, that He awakens the conscience and melts the heart. He does wound, but it is that He may heal; He does humble, but it is that He may

revive and cheer 'the contrite ones.' There is nothing in His work on the heart to prevent the due discharge of social duties, or the due enjoyment of social life; but as the healing hand of time leads bereaved mourners gently and gradually back to their wonted composure and proper business, without doing any violence to the sacredness of their sorrows, so the Spirit of all grace leads back the penitent mourner to his proper place and work in society, under the influence of hopes and principles which qualify him to do well for both worlds.

There is in conversion sorrow for sin, but there is also the hope of pardon; and what honest or rational pursuit could be hindered by either? There is in conversion self-abasement before God, but there is also love to God, and some reliance on Him; and what laudable enterprise or virtuous enjoyment could these spoil or prevent? There is in conversion a spirit of prayer and watchfulness, but there is also a spirit of dependence on grace and providence; and that must be a very questionable business, and that a mere equivocal pleasure, which would be injured by either spirit. Marvel not that ye must be born again, for there is nothing in the change to turn activity into idleness, or cheerfulness into melancholy, or energy into weakness, or manliness into pusillanimity. All the proper business of life would be better conducted, all the real enjoyments of life more relished, all the noble pursuits of life more successful, and all the poetry of life more lovely, were they combined

with the vital godliness of a regenerated heart. Cowper did not cease to be a poet when he became 'altogether a Christian.'

Would there were no necessity for such remarks! I feel ashamed of making them—not, of course, that I doubt their truth at all, nor that I care little for the genius which has been allied with piety, but I am ashamed to plead the claims of the Eternal Spirit, by proving that they do not clash with public duty or mental improvement. There ought to be no necessity for demonstrating or illustrating this fact, by appeals to the living or to the dead. The mighty God, the Lord, hath spoken and said, '*Ye must be born again.*'

I know not, of course, the precise circumstances under which you read these hints. You may have stood lately by the deathbed and the grave of an endeared parent or friend; and if so, you were not unmoved by the scene. You have not forgotten it; and you feel as if you never could forget it, it was so solemn and affecting! Well, it is not the emotions of that trying moment I want to revive.

Believe me, God sympathizes with your sorrows far more than any of those who weep whilst you weep. I do not mean that your friends are insincere in their sympathy, but I do mean that they cannot hold your sorrows so *sacred* as God does. He sees in them, and intends by them, that which may lead you safe into the heaven of heavens, by leading you direct to the hope set before you in the gospel. Now, His design you must fall in with, if you would get real good

from your trials. All their natural influence, however moral in its character for a time, will be as the early cloud and the morning dew, evanescent. Many have wept at the family grave, who are now laughing in the chair of the scorner or the drunkard. Many who imagined that they had buried their vices and their vanity in the parental tomb, are now filling up the measure of their iniquity, and taking their swing in both crime and folly. If, therefore, you meant well by any promise you gave to a dying mother, by any tear you shed at a father's sepulchre, by any pledge you gave to the God of heaven when He made your 'heart soft,' follow up, follow out your resolutions, by following providence to the Cross of Christ. Providence arose to lead you there; to bring you there, it smote you; to drive you there, it repeated its strokes; and the explanation of all its discipline is this, 'What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' and lose it he must, unless he set himself, by consideration and prayer, to invite and invoke the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER V.

MANLY VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS MYSTERY.

IF the man who first said that 'Religion ends where mystery begins,' imagined that he had uttered a *smart* thing, he must have been weaker than those who repeat it. The terseness of the antithesis led them to adopt it as a maxim. They were misled by taking for granted, that what was so well expressed must be well founded. No such excuse, however, can be put forward on behalf of the author of this *sounding* fallacy. It duped him before it acquired its witty form. But however this may be, no man whose sense and sincerity are equal, could be misled for a moment by such a sciolism. It is as false and absurd as to say 'that travelling ends where the sea begins.' The mode and the medium of travelling end where the sea begins, but the motion goes on in the new element as well as on land. In like manner, religion *need* not end where mystery begins. There is 'a path in the dark waters' of mystery, as well as on the tableland of morality. Adoration, modesty, and faith may go on wisely, even when comprehension must stop

and reason hesitate. '*We walk by faith, not by sight,*' says Paul; and in saying this in regard to religion, the apostle said no more than every man *does* in almost all the affairs of ordinary life. Both life and the means of life are full of mystery, and call for as much implicit faith as the great mystery of godliness requires; for what aliment of our subsistence do we comprehend either in its original elements or in its adaptation to our nourishment? Mankind have, in fact, nothing to go by in the use of food but faith and experience. I say faith, as well as experience, for no length of experience as to the usefulness of any article of home or foreign consumption could prove to a certainty that the *new* supply is as nutritious as the *old* stock. Thus we are thrown from year to year on the principle of implicit faith in God and man—in God, by believing that He has not altered the quality of the crops; and in man, by believing that neither the growers nor the sellers of provision have poisoned it. Thus we actually live by faith in the constancy of providence, and in the general integrity and humanity of mankind. Without implicit faith in both, we should be haunted with the suspicion of *poison* whenever we eat or drink; and were any man to reject food, until he could understand and explain the entire nature of liquids and solids, who does not see that he must starve?

Thus there would be no more folly in saying 'that eating should end where mystery in food begins,' than there is in saying that religion ends where

mystery begins. It is just as truly ascertained by experience, that religion, with all its mysteries, does *good* to all who meekly believe them, as it is that food, with all its mysteries, sustains those who use it. Indeed, if mystery ought to stop or disturb anything in the affairs of life or godliness, what would it not put an end to, for they are all *based* on mysteries. Were religion to end where mystery begins, religion could not *begin* at all in earth or heaven; for, were religion nothing but mere 'bodily service' in obedience to simple rules, the very *utterance* of these rules by God and the bare *apprehension* of them by man would be inexplicable mysteries. Our familiarity with the power of words to convey ideas, renders us insensible to this fact, but the moment we try to explain or comprehend that power we are lost. It is as much a mystery as instinct. In a word, a religion without mystery, must be a religion without a God; for the moment a God is admitted, mystery begins, and can never end. Unitarianism pretends, indeed, to be a religion without mysteries, and certainly it is not the fault of its votaries that any mystery cleaves to that system. They have done all that men could do to rid it of them, and somewhat more than even the devil ever ventured to try; for he did not venture to question the inspiration of the texts quoted against his proposals in the wilderness, nor to evade their force by analyzing their figures. But still, after all that has been dared and done to rid Unitarianism of mystery, even the *oneness* of its God leaves Him *incom-*

prehensible; and what more can Trinitarianism make Him? I readily allow that there is *less* mystery in the theory of one person in the Godhead, than in the revelation of three persons in the unity of the Godhead; but as even the Unitarian theory ascribes *infinity* or omnipresence to its God, it thus announces so much mystery, that the faith which bows to that infinity, need not stagger at the revealed *plurality* of the divine essence. That essence may surely subsist in inconceivable forms, seeing it is allowed even by simplifiers to pervade the infinitude of space. This is, however, a question of pure revelation, and therefore may be soon settled. I say 'soon,' because there cannot be '*two sides*' of the question in the Bible. For if it be the fact that there is but one person in the Godhead, it is also the fact that the Bible is intended to teach the unity of the Godhead; and therefore, all that the Bible says must be on *one* side of the question. There is either nothing in it about the Father *alone* being God, or all that is in it ascribes divinity to no one else. But what is the fact? It is that the lively oracles proclaim the divinity of the Son as much as the divinity of the Father, and claim for Him all the works and worship which they ascribe to the Father. And is this the way to teach that there is but one person in the Godhead? This *is* the way in which revelation teaches the unity of the Godhead. In like manner it ascribes to the Holy Spirit, both the attributes and operations which are peculiar to Deity. Accordingly, on almost all minds in all nations to

whom 'the word of God has come,' it has left the impression that there is a Trinity in the Godhead. Even on the minds of those who deny the Trinity, the Bible has left a conviction that it requires much learning, labour, and dexterity to prevent it from making men Trinitarians. It keeps Unitarians for ever on the stretch, to counteract its natural influence on the public mind.

Weigh these facts. Had the Bible been intended to teach mankind that the Father alone is God, there would have been nothing in it contrary to this, nothing inconsistent with this, nothing to cloud or encumber this, yea, there *ought* to have been nothing in it that could suggest the bare idea of the Son or the Spirit being divine also; but there is so much in it contrary to and inconsistent with the *exclusive* divinity of the Father, that almost all who receive the Scriptures as a revelation from heaven become Trinitarians, and even those who do not become so, can only maintain their existence as a sect, by expunging many parts of the Bible, and explaining away the obvious sense of more. Now, no Unitarian book produces any such impression upon the mind of its readers. Neither criticism nor caution is needed in order to prevent us from imagining that Priestley or Belsham taught the doctrine of the Trinity. Both the letter and spirit of their writings are uniformly and unequivocally against it. Why, then, is not the Bible equally against the Trinity, if the doctrine be untrue? Why is there anything in Scripture, that

suggests the bare idea of three persons in the Godhead, if there be only one? No other rational answer can be given to these questions, than that the Bible never was intended to teach the exclusive divinity of the Father. Accordingly, it has led the immense majority of all who have read it to believe that Father, Son, and Spirit are one Jehovah.

There is, indeed, mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity; but both the Bible and providence would be a 'mystery of iniquity' if it were not true, for they spread widely and support uniformly, nothing else on the subject of the divine nature. If, therefore, there be great mystery in the doctrine, all the great miracles of omnipotence, and all the great measures of providence, and all the signal monuments of antiquity, and all the popular traditions of the world, are on its side. It is not an unsanctioned nor an unenshrined mystery. The seal of heaven accredits its truth, and the smiles of heaven accelerate its triumphs. Amidst the number and splendour of its vouchers and victories, it is almost impossible to remember that there is, or ever was, in existence such a petty thing as Unitarianism.

It is therefore *more* than mystery that he rejects who rejects the Trinity. In doing that, he set himself in opposition to all the verdicts of experience and to all the visions of immortality; for the former accredit no other gospel but the Trinitarian, as 'the power of God unto salvation,' or even unto moral reformation; and the latter illustrate nothing more

clearly, than that all the armies of heaven unite in 'honouring the Son, even as they honour the Father.'

Look at the latter fact first. You know nothing of heaven, but just what is *revealed* concerning it. No man has any more information on the subject, or can obtain more. It is not the heaven of revelation, therefore, that he looks for, who confines his adoration to the Father, or withholds his confidence from the blood of the Lamb. For what part could he take in hallelujahs, which glorify God and the Lamb equally? or in anthems, which ascribe salvation entirely and exclusively to the blood of atonement? This is the worship of heaven, and it swells equally from the hearts and harps of saints and angels. What, therefore, could a Unitarian do there, but either confess that he had never believed the Bible, or charge all heaven with idolatry and error? This would be, in fact, his only alternative. Is it not therefore unmanly, and even contemptible, to talk of heaven, and yet to treat Christ as a mere man and a martyr? It cannot surely be the heaven of Revelation which Unitarians mean when they speak of a glorious immortality, for 'the Lamb is the light and glory' of the immortality illuminated by the gospel; and if they do mean *another* heaven, why do they not speak out and tell us plainly where and what it is? Those should not *mystify* who denounce mystery!

After this, never pretend that you know not what

creed to adopt. If you desire to spend your eternity in the heaven which the Saviour opened in the visions of Patmos, and announced in His sermons, adopt the creed of that heaven. Adore God and the Lamb, as all the armies of it do; and thus you can never be at a loss. There will, indeed, still be mystery—much and great mystery, but all of it openly sanctioned by all who are around the throne, and by 'Him that sitteth on the throne.'

Look now at the second fact. All the verdicts of experience accredit Trinitarianism as 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' All fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy, and all signal providences, are on its side. The *mysterious* creed is thus the only form of Christianity which has ever been successful or sanctifying in our world. Weigh this fact.

Prophecy supposes and requires the existence and exercise of a *special providence* in order to its fulfilment; and an overruling providence, once established, opens such a guardianship for truth in the world, that we may naturally expect to find the latter under the wing of the former, and the wheel of providence in the track of the Gospel, breaking up its way amongst the nations, and gradually crushing down opposition. Now, if Unitarianism be '*the truth as it is in Jesus*,' it, and it alone, will exhibit on its side all the signal interpositions of providence since the Christian era; for if *they* have been on the side of Trinitarianism, God, on Unitarian principles, has been giving currency to error, and success to absurdity.

God did not more signally prove Himself by miracles to be on the side of truth, than He solemnly pledged Himself by prophecy to continue on its side for ever. Is He then—has He ever been—on the side of Unitarianism? If so, when? where? how? The *right hand* of God is not such an indefinite or indistinct object, but it may be pointed to when it is stretched out in His own cause. He has made it *bare* in the sight of all nations; successive ages have said of successive interpositions, '*Is not this the finger of God?*' And at this moment the Christian world feel themselves on the verge of a grand moral era, the very dawn of which sets them on tiptoe as they gaze. And has Unitarianism neither part nor lot in this matter? Is she '*like the heath in the desert*,' that knoweth not when good comes? Of late, indeed, their system has obtained a name and place in the old Presbyterian chapels of England; but how was possession gained? Tell it not in Gath, *under the mask of orthodoxy*—by means *you* would not connect providence with nor attempt to *sanctify* by their success.[1] And as this event stamps indelible disgrace upon

[1] In Cottle's *Early Recollections of Coleridge*, vol. ii. p. 84, that celebrated philosopher, who was himself for many years a Socinian, thus testifies: 'Though beguiled once by them, I, happily for my own peace of mind, escaped from their sophistries, and now hesitate not to affirm that Socinians would lose all character for honesty if they were to explain their neighbour's will with the same latitude of interpretation which they do the Scriptures. It is a gross perversion of the truth in Socinians to declare that we believe in three Gods, and they know it to be false.'

those Unitarians who '*with feigned words made merchandise*' of the Trinitarian congregations, where are the interpositions of providence on behalf of the new system? But I forget; it claims, of course, *all* the miraculous and signal interpositions of providence during the *first* and *second* centuries, since, according to its own account, Unitarianism was the primitive system. Now, suppose I grant this for a moment, for the sake of argument, what does it lead to? In fact, to a conclusion which of itself *disproves* the assumption. For if it were true that all the *miracles* were wrought in behalf of Unitarianism, it would be true also that all the *prophecies* were written in its behalf; but as none of the *latter* have been fulfilled in its favour, none of the *former* belong to it, because both must be found on *one* side, or not at all. Granting again, however, that it *was* Unitarianism which was ushered into the world, amidst the songs of angels and under the banners of miracles, that for it a highway was opened into '*Cæsar's household*,' and all across the moral wilderness of the three continents, how comes it that God abandoned Unitarianism when the banners of miracles were folded up? How do you account for its triumphs ceasing ever since, and its being left to the scorn of every church and state in Christendom? Why is it that everything known or acknowledged as providence, has since the failure of miracles frowned on that creed? *This* is *not* the manner of the Most High in regard to truth; this is *not* what we are taught to expect from His manage-

ment. God (if Unitarianism were the gospel) has been harassing and depressing the gospel for fifteen hundred years, and making every vicissitude and revolution abet the cause of error.[1]

I have granted, for the sake of argument, that Unitarianism *might* be the primitive system; and we have seen that it was soon forsaken by providence. Now, only pay me back the compliment for a moment, and grant that Trinitarianism was the primitive system; and if you find *that* forsaken by providence in *any age* since the Christian era, I will admit that you have established a serious objection against it.

Assuming, then, that Trinitarianism was the system taught by Christ and His apostles, the sudden death of Constantine saved it from the deep-laid scheme of Eusebius to establish Arianism in its room. Constans maintained it in the western empire, until he was murdered. Constantius could not stifle it, nor Julian sneer it into contempt, nor Valens eradicate

[1] The *British Quarterly Review* for January 1878 contains the following confirmation of these remarks, p. 171: 'As an agency for the direct promotion of Christ's great work, Socinianism was a failure—an utter failure. Nor has modern Unitarianism distinguished itself in the same direction. Its public services are cold as ice; the private religious devotions of its adherents are said to be scanty and formal; its activity for men is mainly restricted to education, general works of benevolence, and the like; and it has done next to nothing for Foreign Missions. Wherever the spirit of Unitarianism creeps into the orthodox churches, religious zeal languishes, religious worship is neglected, and religious fellowship loses its inwardness.'

it, nor Apollinaris corrupt it. Even whilst the imperial sceptre was shifting like a shadow from hand to hand, and the state religion modelling itself according to state policy, Trinitarianism held its place from the time of Constantine till that of Theodosius, when it became dominant, and has continued so ever since. It is the fact, therefore, that ever since Trinitarianism, like a vessel, was launched from the port of Judea upon the sea of public opinion, she has not only ridden out every storm during eighteen centuries, but touched at every shore.

It will not do, in the face of all this, for Unitarians to affect composure, and exclaim, '*Truth is great and will prevail!*' Truth has always been great, and her greatness of that kind which has always ensured what their system never had, the smiles of providence. And it would be still worse to evade these arguments, by saying that Unitarianism has had but a short time for her experiments on the world. It has been brief, certainly; but the *shorter* you prove it to be, the *longer* you make the period during which providence abandoned and overthrew what they call '*the Truth.*'

If the foregoing remarks illustrate anything to the point, it is that public opinion, prophecy, and providence wear an equally unfavourable aspect towards Unitarianism. Public opinion braves the system; prophecy brands it Antichrist; providence, which forms public opinion and fulfils prophecy, abandons

their cause upon every great movement of the moral world.

I come now to the manifest inconsistency between the *tenor* of Scripture and the *tenor* of Unitarianism; and as my limits impose the utmost brevity, I must have recourse to a mode of illustration which will give *multum in parvo.*

Unitarianism is a *system*, and, according to Unitarians, a *perfect summary* of the revealed will of God to man for the obedience of faith. Now, if it be a *perfect* digest of divine truth (and it ought to be so before urging it on the world), it wants nothing but the *formal* authority of the Bible to make it *equal* to the Bible. For if a transfer of that authority to the system, did not raise it to an equal rank with the Scriptures, it could only be because it is *unscripural* in its *present* state. They say *it is not*, and cannot say otherwise without giving up its claims. Suppose then for a moment that God, in a visible and indisputable manner, should abolish the Bible entirely, and give to the world in its stead *a written copy of the* UNITARIAN SYSTEM, having all the authority and sacredness which the Bible has had. You know that God could do so, and by a few signal miracles stamp the divinity of the latter as high as the former. Suppose all this done in the eyes of all nations, and the creed of every nation Unitarian, and this state of things five hundred years old, and the present Bible utterly forgotten, and the existing commentaries and orthodox writings lost, and nothing extant but what

Unitarians approve of now. They can have no serious objections to these suppositions, because the chief part of them are hopes they cherish and wish to see realized.

Now, suppose that after five hundred years (when their system would be dominant, and endeared by as many pious and learned works as Trinitarianism now boasts), some minister of talents and influence should address such a *circular* as the following to the Unitarian churches :—

'DEARLY BELOVED,—Grace be with you; mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love! All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; and let all the angels of God worship Him, for He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. By Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were made by Him and for Him. His goings forth were of old, even from everlasting! When His Father addressed Him, He said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever! Thou, Jehovah, in the beginning, didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands!" Therefore it becomes us to ascribe "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever; be-

cause he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."'

How would such a letter be received by churches formed on the principle, that divine names and divine honours are the *exclusive* rights of the Father? The writer would be branded as an idolater, and his letter committed to the flames; or, if any one leaned to his opinions, an appeal would be made to the *New Bible* (which I have supposed), and the wavering brother dared to produce from it, *one* instance in which Christ is called God, Jehovah, or Creator. And you know that he could *not*, if any of the existing summaries of Unitarianism were exalted into the rank of the Bible, and substituted in its room. And if these passages, which I have thrown into the form of a letter, would savour of idolatry five hundred years hence (under that state of things I have supposed), they do so now, on every principle but that of the Son's *equality* with the Father.

Thus there is no alternative but to accept mystery, or to succumb to absurdity.

CHAPTER VI.

MANLY VIEWS OF DIVINE HOLINESS.

THE most natural and scriptural idea we can form of the Divine life and blessedness 'from everlasting,' is that the past eternity was occupied in planning, what will take the future eternity to accomplish. And now observe—the infinite *holiness* of Jehovah was the basis of His infinite happiness from everlasting. God has been blessed for ever, because holy for ever; for on no other ground could eternal happiness rest or remain.

It has been often proved to demonstration, that if God had not always been, He never could have been at all; and it is equally capable of demonstration, that if He had not been always holy, He never could have been happy. This fact is self-evident, when viewed in connection with the eternity which preceded all created being and things, for then, besides Himself, there was nothing to delight in or to be occupied with. If therefore the Eternal Mind was not of a character to find enjoyment in itself, and to be the spring of its own felicity, it had no resource whatever beyond itself, and must have been miser-

able. I repeat it: God must from everlasting have been miserable, if not immaculately holy from everlasting, because prior to the birth of time there were no *external* sources of enjoyment; and *internal* there could not have been, if purity was wanting, because in that case there was no security against bad feelings, which are their own punishment. Mind, whether created or uncreated, is of such a nature that it cannot cease from thinking or feeling about itself or something, and in proportion to its power is its activity. Now the powers of the Eternal Mind, being infinite, must have been infinitely active; and if active only or even often about evil, conscious misery in the same degree must have been the consequence. I dare not trust myself to follow out this argument; but I see at a glance how an *unholy* God must be a wretched being, exactly in proportion to His intellectual energy. Such a being might annihilate himself, or become insane during the height and sweep of infinite passions; but I check my own mind—the true God is essentially and infinitely holy, and therefore has been eternally happy. No wrong thought or feeling ever passed through His mind; but from everlasting its powers circled around its plans, calm and bright as the sea of glass around the throne of glory. And what must the holiness of the divine nature be, seeing it has for ever maintained the balance and harmony of infinite energies, although all in eternal exercise—upheld from everlasting the tranquillity and equanimity of that mind through which all the affairs of

all worlds, of all beings, of all time, of all eternity, have passed in revision, deliberation, and judgment? This mighty sum of beings, things, and events, even if all uniformly lovely in themselves, seem too immense to be contemplated with unmixed pleasure or unfailing patience; and diversified as they are by vice and weakness, it seems impossible to have even thought of them all without passion or pain. And without being glorious in holiness, God could not have viewed them unimpaired in His own happiness; but, strange to tell, holiness, the very perfection which makes evil abhorrent to God, is the very perfection which from eternity upheld His bliss and composure in contemplating all things. These are wonderful themes, if we had only strength to follow them up to their height; but even as bare hints, they are inspiring to reflecting minds. I love to get disentangled from time and the checkered scenes of life until I live in thought before them all. I cannot shake off the perplexities occasioned by the aspect of nature and providence, until I get beyond their birth, and into the solitary depths of a silent eternity; but then although in one sense lost, in another I am surrounded by simple facts, by solid principles, by self-evident maxims, which, like guardian angels, take me by the hand and conduct me into marvellous light and peace unspeakable. If you can hardly believe this, I will give you a specimen of reasoning in that glorious retirement of the soul, the eternity before time.

I enter it looking for the throne of God. I find the high and holy place; I am assured that the Holy One has dwelt there from eternity, glorious in holiness. And now I want no more to reason from. On this basis I can build up the theory of the universe He is to create, and of the government He is to establish. Thus, will a God infinitely holy, rise from His eternal throne to make anything evil? No. To do anything evil? No. To act contrary to His nature? No. To tarnish His unsullied purity? No. Then let the universe of being rise when it will, let His system of government be promulgated when it may, all will be right, all as it should be, for the author of all is glorious in holiness. Men and things may be mysterious, changeable, checkered in their lot, aspect, and character; but whatever evil there may be in either, a holy God cannot be the author of it. Having got hold of this self-evident and certain truth, I bring it down to the fall and fate of angels; they are miserable in all their immortal powers: no wonder, they are unholy, and unholiness would make God Himself miserable. Even His happiness could not survive the loss of His holiness. How then could theirs? I now apply the principle to mankind. Misery both natural and moral abounds in the world; all men are more or less unhappy at all times: they search creation for happiness in vain, and find only vexation of spirit. This seems hard; but they are *unholy*, and therefore inevitably unhappy. God Himself could not avoid being

wretched were He unholy; His creatures are therefore, even in the depth of their wretchedness, only what He Himself must be, were He like them in heart and character. Here, then, I deny that there is any *mystery* in the severest dispensations of providence, if you admit that there is *sin* in all that suffer by them. While men are unholy, they must be unhappy; this consequence is as natural and inevitable as darkness after sunset, or cold in winter. Now the sun of divine holiness has held an eternal meridian, and therefore God has been blessed for ever; but the sun of human holiness has set, and therefore men are unhappy. In the case of the children of God, that sun is rising again, and therefore they are rising again to enjoyment and peace, but not until it shine in perfect day will either be perfect. Away therefore with the unprincipled clamour about hard lots, heavy calamities, mysterious trials; I have had my share of them, but I see nothing unfair or unaccountable in them. Those, therefore, who only condole and sympathize with sufferers, defeat their own kind purpose, for the misery they strive to mitigate, admits of no effectual cure but restoration to true holiness, or the image of God. While, therefore, I wish my heart to be like the *river sponge*, saturated with the passing streams of another's sorrow, and weeping with those that weep, I must belie all right principle if I do not feel chiefly for their and my own want of holiness.

Having thus given you some idea of how essential

holiness is even to the happiness of God, you will now be prepared to go fully into the subject of this chapter.

His holiness is represented as the beauty of His nature and character. Even Plutarch, the heathen philosopher, obtained somehow a glimpse of this fact, and said, 'Holiness is the beauty of the divine essence; God is not so happy by an eternity of life, as by excellency of virtue.'

Proclus calls God 'the undefiled Governor of the world.' And it was to keep this beauty of the divine nature untarnished, that some of the wisest of the heathen writers invented the eternity of matter; to that they ascribed all sin, that they might acquit God of being the author of sin, so sacred was their idea of His holiness. In like manner, to absolve God from all taint or suspicion of evil, the Manichean heretics maintained two eternal principles, the one the origin of all evil, the other the origin of all good, thus running into absurdities in order to avoid that contradiction in terms, an unholy God. Now, if heathens and heretics were thus careful to invest God with the beauty of holiness, we may expect that the sacred writers would not neglect to do so. Accordingly Jehoshaphat summons all the vocal and instrumental powers of music to the theme, that they might praise the beauty of holiness. To behold the beauty of the Lord, David desired to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. To illustrate it, he represents Jehovah clothed with light as with a garment. In like manner both the Old and New Testa-

ment writers agree in exhibiting the divine holiness, as the beauty which captivates and charms all the armies of heaven: 'They rest not day nor night, crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.' Thus while the Bible calls the omnipotence of God His arm, His omniscience His eye, His mercy His heart, His infinity His form, His eternity His life, they call His holiness His beauty; and agreeably to this fine idea, that beauty is made to beautify with its own reflective loveliness everything it relates to. This is so well illustrated by a living writer, that I cannot do better than quote his own words: 'Because heaven is the habitation of the holy God, it is called His holy heaven; because the temple was the place where He graciously afforded the indications of His presence, it was called His holy temple; the very ground on which Jehovah condescended to admit Moses to an audience was called holy ground; the mountain on which the Saviour was transfigured was called the holy mount; the day set apart for divine worship is called the holy day; and in a far higher sense are the people of God called a holy people.' I will only add to this fine enumeration the unparalleled emblem of David, where he describes the beauty of the holiness of the Saviour's people as 'the dew from the womb of the morning.' And if their finite and reflected holiness will be eventually as the morning dew, with what beauty must infinite and essential purity invest Jehovah! Well may it be said the heavens are not clean in His sight.

His holiness is represented as the *glory* of His nature, character, and government.

It is on this principle that God celebrates His justice as holy justice, His wisdom as holy wisdom, His omnipotence as His holy arm, His omniscience as His holy eye, His truth as His holy promise, His commands as His holy law, and all His works as holy works. Thus He is altogether glorious in holiness; 'for without that,' says Charnock, 'His patience would be indulgence to sin, His mercy a fondness, His wrath a madness, His power a tyranny, His wisdom a subtilty. His holiness gives a decorum to all.' 'Were not all His perfections distinguished and adorned by the quality of holiness,' says Dr. Burder, 'He who sways the sceptre of the universe might be an object of dread, but not of love or confidence. Such a being might become the scourge and terror of creation.'

This is indeed strong language, but I quote it without apology, because if I employed my own upon the subject it would be far stronger, without being less true; for if anything be morally certain, it is that without holiness there would be no real glory in any one of the divine perfections, because no security for their rational or fair exercise. It is not, however, necessary to pursue this argument further; let us therefore satisfy ourselves that holiness *is* the glory of all the divine perfections.

To prove and illustrate this fact in the case of each attribute of Jehovah, would occupy more space than

I can command. I will therefore confine my remarks to His *mercy* and *justice;* for these two virtually include all the rest.

Now holiness is the glory of divine mercy, whether that mercy be viewed as the disposition of God, the purpose of God, or the act of God. In all these characters it has its chief glory in its holiness; and in this way mercy, viewed as the disposition of Jehovah, or as His feelings, flows from His love of holiness; for had He not loved that supremely and unspeakably, He would have felt no sympathy for sinners, but would have allowed them to be unholy still. Had He cared nothing or but little about holiness, He could have had no motive nor inclination to provide a Saviour; for of what consequence could it be, however vile man were, if God were indifferent about purity. But because He loved purity infinitely, He so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son to be the propitiation for sin and the redeemer from sin. His mercy in its principle, plan, and gift, is therefore the measure of His love to holiness, because the practical design of all His mercy is to bring around His throne, in the beauty of holiness, a multitude which no man can number—all without spot or blemish. That His people may be holy, as He is holy, He made His Son unto them 'wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification.' Thus every step, struggle, sacrifice, and triumph of mercy on behalf of man, was on behalf of *holiness* too; love to the latter furnished

the motive, inflamed the desire, fortified the resolution, found the means of redeeming the former. Holiness is, therefore, the glory of mercy. The plan of mercy is a holy covenant; the mediator of mercy, a holy Saviour; the applier of mercy, a Holy Spirit; the fruits of mercy, a holy generation; the final glory of mercy, a church like unto Him who is the express image of the Father of mercies. Well therefore may I call upon myself and you, in the language of Jehoshaphat, 'Praise ye the beauty of holiness;' and in the language of David, 'Give thanks at the remembrance of God's holiness.' Well may we charge our souls to love holiness supremely; for had not God loved it so, He would not have so loved the world, as to give His Son to save His people from their sins.

I must not quit this part of the subject without availing myself of the fine opportunity it affords for attaching distinct ideas to the general maxim, that the cause of all that God has done in salvation, is simply the advancement of His own *glory*. Nothing can be more true than this maxim; but let not your ideas of its meaning be vague. The glory of Jehovah is His *goodness*. Why? Just because holiness is the foundation and spring of all His goodness. He is good, because He is holy; for to spread, exalt, and perpetuate holiness throughout the universe, His tender mercies are over all His other works. We do not therefore go far enough when we trace redemption to the love of God as its first cause, and to the

glory of God as its *final* end. That ought to be done, cannot be too often done; but, whenever it is done, there is another thing that should not be left undone, namely, tracing the love of God to its origin or moral cause, which is the holiness of the divine nature, or God's love of righteousness. Nothing can be more certain than this; for an unholy God could neither have motive nor inclination to love the world, in the way the High and Holy One has done. Here, then, are distinct ideas of His glory being the final *end* of all His works; it is the promotion of holiness by the exercise of goodness. Allow me, therefore, to indulge my feelings for a moment here, and to say, 'Holiness! thou art the fountain of all the love, the grace, the mercy, and the goodness, which are to us the fountains of salvation! Thou art the foundation of all the kindness, condescension, and faithfulness, which are to us the foundations of hope and confidence! Thou art the shield of the unchangeableness, truth, and omnipotence, which are to us the shields of eternal safety and protection! Give thanks at the remembrance of Thy holiness! Yes, Holy One of Israel! never will I forget it; never remember it without regarding it as the eternal source and the eternal security of all that is gracious in Thy heart, glorious in Thy character, wonderful in Thy works. Because Thou art infinitely holy, Thou art infinitely good; because Thou wilt be eternally holy, Thou wilt be eternally good. I have thought of Thy holiness with suspicion or hatred; so foolish was I, that I have

wished Thee less holy! This was, in fact, wishing Thee to be my implacable and immortal enemy for ever; wishing myself and Thee to be eternally wretched. "Thus I was as a beast before Thee!" "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!"'

I proceed now to show how holiness is the glory of divine *justice.*

Every act of justice on the part of God is only the exercise of holiness, however summary, severe, or final. The same holiness originates and regulates all judgment, which originated and regulates all mercy. As God does not go a step farther in pardoning, than where He can be holy in doing so, neither will He in punishing. He will be glorious in holiness, both in saving and condemning. It is therefore well for devils, and through eternity it will be well for all the lost, that God is holy; for, though His being so must in their case for ever prevent mercy, it will for ever prevent injustice too. Nothing unnecessary or unreasonable ever has been, or ever will be, inflicted upon them, even when the flaming sword of justice waves in all its terrors, and hell burns in all its fierceness; the strokes and storms of wrath will be as much regulated by holiness, as the rest and raptures of heaven will be so. God will be holy in all His ways, and equally holy in them all, whether wrath walk through the bottomless pit, or love walk through the mansions of glory. Holiness will preside with the

same equity over suffering in hell, as over bliss in heaven.

True, it may be said, but of what advantage will this be to condemned spirits? It will afford them no relief from hell, or in hell. Certainly not; but it will afford them no pretext for charging God with injustice, for He will render unto every man only according to his works. Mark, then, the glory of justice in punishing sin; punishment will be fiercest against the neglectors of the great salvation; but such is the holiness of God, that although provoked in the highest by that *crime of crimes*, in avenging it He will indulge no undue anger, inflict no unreasonable punishment. And yet you say the punishment will be eternal? Yes, that is the measure of its duration, whatever be the degree of its fierceness. Eternal banishment from His presence, is the very least curse that a holy God can inflict upon unholy beings; for if anything less could avenge sin sufficiently, depend upon it, holiness would not have fixed everlasting destruction. It was in no passion, in no rash moment, that God decreed this as the penalty of guilt. He was never more calm, collected, deliberate, or just, than when He fixed this as the sentence of the law and the sanction of the Gospel; and He will be equally so when He executes that sentence. Let, therefore, no trifler flatter himself with the hope of entire escape, or of enduring less than eternal misery, if he persist in trifling with the Gospel. It cannot be less except God become unholy; and were He to become so, then ten thousand

times woe to thee beyond the woe of hell! for then wouldst thou be in the hands of unprincipled omnipotence, in the storms of infinite passions, the sport and prey of eternal tyranny. Man! if devils thought that God would become unholy, they would unite in deprecating the change, and turn hell into a house of prayer, in which the everlasting cry would be, King Eternal! remain eternally holy. Oh! if I durst pour out the fulness of my own thoughts and tell you what an unholy God must be, I could terrify you at the bare idea. Letting loose the planets from their orbits, and the suns of the universe from their centres, until the material creation was dashing to atoms, like icebergs in the shock of a polar storm in the northern seas, would be nothing to the letting loose of infinite power and passion from the magnetic control of holiness.

Having thus largely shown the light in which the Word of God places the holiness of God, I solicit your attention to the light in which the actual dispensations or works of God place His holiness. Now there are *three* classes of God's public measures, each of which manifests His immaculate holiness. These are His retributive, redeeming, and regenerating works. I notice first His acts of judicial retribution or punishment; and here it deserves special observation, that in Scripture the holiness of Jehovah is chiefly celebrated by saints and angels, whenever any signal judgment is inflicted upon the wicked. It was just after the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea,

and when they had sunk as lead in the mighty waters, that Moses and Miriam sung, 'Who is a God like unto Thee, glorious in holiness?' It was while the Temple shook, and the judicial curse of a seared conscience went forth upon the Jews, that the Seraphim cried one to another, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is filled with Thy glory!' It was when the Lord said, 'My determination is to gather the nations and assemble the kingdoms, that I may pour out my indignation, even all my fierce anger upon Jerusalem,'—it was then Zephaniah said, 'The just Lord is in the midst thereof; He will do no iniquity.' It is when the apocalyptic trumpets and thunders are sounding, and while the vials of wrath are pouring out on the seat of the beast and of the false prophet, that all who stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, sing, 'Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints, Thou only art holy.' Other instances might be quoted, but these will show that the most signal acts of *judgment* are viewed and adored by saints and angels, as glorious manifestations of holiness. This fact agrees with and confirms the definition I gave of holiness, as being that principle of the eternal mind, by which God necessarily loves whatever is right, and hates whatever is wrong. Accordingly, in punishing sin, God manifests His holiness by proving His hatred of what is wrong.

The most signal proof of this in the case of creatures, was given in the final expulsion from heaven of the angels who kept not their first estate. From

thrones of light, they were banished to chains of darkness; from being morning stars amongst the sons of God, they were turned into meteors of devouring fire. The place on the hills of immortality which knew them once, knows and will know them no more for ever. They fell to rise no more; were cast out, never to be taken in again. This act is usually called one of awful sovereignty, and when contrasted with the treatment given to fallen man, it is the severity of sovereignty; but viewed as it should be, by itself and in itself, I deny that it is anything of the kind. It was essentially and simply an act of perfect *holiness*, having in it not an iota of more severity than the demerits of the case absolutely demanded. Those who will not take the trouble of thinking, may talk nonsense if they choose, and resolve unpitied sufferings into unmixed *sovereignty;* it is an easy process, a convenient abyss for burying difficulties in. I believe in a God infinitely holy, and therefore I believe in no sovereignty which is not as holy in all its principles and acts as Jehovah Himself. I must therefore either maintain that He is unholy, or that the punishment of fallen angels is the very least in nature and degree that a holy God could inflict, and yet maintain His holiness untarnished. If He could have abated a fraction of the penalty, or mitigated their curse, He would have done it. He would have *rejoiced* to do it! He would have been more prompt to lessen the weight of His wrath against sinning angels, than they could have been in asking for a diminution of it. While, there-

fore, there is sovereignty in not providing a Saviour for them, there is nothing of the kind in their punishment; that is as perfectly a holy act in its principle and character, as God's approving and accepting the perfect work of His own Son. There was no more *passion* in the way He treated them, than there was *partiality* in the way He treated Christ. Away, therefore, with all equivocating and evasion; if God be holy, nothing but holiness shines in the fate of fallen angels. Accordingly, they themselves acknowledged as much to Christ. 'Let us alone; art Thou come to torment us before our time? We know Thee, who Thou art, Thou holy One of God.' Thus they insinuated no charge of injustice or of sovereignty, as marking their doom, but merely asked for exemption from the fulness of their torment, until the fulness of its time.

If you have been thinking that all this is useless speculation upon a point foreign to our interests, you will soon find yourself in a mistake. I am not speculating, but speaking forth the words of truth and soberness concerning the holiness of God. There will be nothing but holiness in the act of punishing eternally all the wicked. There will be neither sovereignty nor undue severity in their doom. It will be just what the interests and claims of holiness require, and nothing more or less. Men may talk of everlasting misery as horrid and shocking, and severe; and if this be said only of the misery itself, it is true, 'for who amongst us can dwell with everlasting burn-

ings;' but if such epithets implicate either the justice or the goodness of God, they are as foolish as they are impious, unless it be a horrid and shocking thing that God should be holy. He must become unholy, or the punishment of sin must be eternal. There is no other alternative. But do you not see that if God became unholy, eternal misery would be equally sure then as it is now, because an unholy being would actually take delight in spreading and perpetuating misery. Wretched himself, he would go about as a roaring lion through the universe, seeking whom he might devour, regardless of character or circumstances. The hell of the Bible is therefore the least of the two evils. What, then, must the holiness of Jehovah be, seeing that nothing less than everlasting destruction is its sentence against the unholy, seeing this is the very *least* punishment that God can inflict, and remain holy Himself? I know not how this view of the solemn fact may affect your minds, but for my own part, I must say that since I saw it in this light, I dread it ten thousand times more than ever I did; for now there is no mystery about the principle on which God acts toward the unholy,—no secret or sovereign reason for His severity, no passion in His procedure, but hell in all its horrors is simply the *natural* consequence of holiness in the Creator, and unholiness in the creature. Here my lips are shut, my reasonings silenced for ever, because I see that God can do nothing less and remain holy. Whatever others do, therefore, as for me, I will seek escape from the wrath

to come, by that sacrifice which glorified the divine holiness in the highest; for in no other way is there any hope of escape. I notice next,

The *redeeming* acts of God as manifesting His immaculate holiness. We have already seen that if anything be morally certain, it is that an unholy God would be unmerciful; because, were He unholy, He must be infinitely so, and therefore could neither be just nor kind. Such a Being could have no motive nor inclination to redeem from guilt and impurity sinful creatures; making them holy could never be a desirable end for Him to pursue, because, were it accomplished, it would exalt their character above His own, and thus inevitably subject Him to their abhorrence. But do you not see with equal clearness, that a God of infinite purity has powerful motives and glorious reasons for purifying the unholy? He is, indeed, under no necessity or obligation to yield to the force of these motives; but if He do so, He acts worthy of Himself, and manifests supreme love to holiness; for surely nothing could be more in harmony with His essential character, than to *assimilate* the unholy to His own beautiful image. This is to multiply its reflections, and, in the case of man, to magnify its glory; because to restore lost holiness, is a more glorious act than to impart original holiness. The very design of redeeming sinners is, therefore, a decisive and illustrious proof of the divine holiness, because the effect of redemption will be entire and eternal conformity to the divine image.

This perfection shines gloriously in the *plan* of redemption; that too, like the design of saving sinners, is a splendid illustration of Jehovah's holiness; for, as a plan, salvation is in harmony with every perfection of Godhead, and every principle of the divine government. It provides not only for their vindication and entire satisfaction, but also for their eternal glory. Condescension made no stoop on behalf of man, but upon the wings of holiness; mercy took no step, but on the ground of holiness; wisdom no measures, but on the maxims of holiness; grace no part, but on the principles of holiness; love no interest, but for the glory of holiness. The first thing settled and secured by the everlasting covenant was, that God should be just—just to all His perfections, just to all His principles, just to all His eternal designs—and that secured, He could then glorify Himself in justifying the ungodly who believe in Jesus. The difficulty of being a just God once removed, He became with all His heart a Saviour. Thus the plan of redemption proves His holiness. In like manner the means and method of accomplishing salvation prove it. The Son of God undertook to be the Mediator of the holy covenant, and thus became the voluntary victim of holiness in the room of the unholy. And never was this perfection so awfully or illustriously displayed as in the treatment of Christ. Holiness took the Son from the bosom of the Father—expelled Him from his seat upon the eternal throne—veiled His divine nature in a human body—banished Him for

thirty years into the deep obscurity of the humblest life; and when all this was done, holiness was only beginning to punish its victim. It brought Him from obscurity, as it had brought Him from the throne, and placed Him under the law of God, and the lash of men and devils. Now holiness led Him about Judea, homeless, friendless, destitute, and though His heart was broken with reproaches, kept Him labouring for the good of His implacable enemies. Anon, holiness exiled Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and exhausted by fasting; again it drew Him into public life and labour, and again thrust Him back into the solitude of the garden to drink the cup of wrath. Now it roused Him from His bloody trance, and empannelled Him at a heathen tribunal; anon, it tore off His garments rolled in blood, and clothed Him in a robe of mockery. Now it laid His cross upon His shoulders until He fainted, and anon it nailed Him to the cross. Now it had hid the sun from His eyes, and anon hid the light of his Father's countenance. Now it made His soul an offering for sin, and anon delivered His body to the grave. Then, and not until then, did holiness finish its avenging strokes upon the victim of law and justice. And in all this awful and heartrending process, there was nothing but holiness proceeding against sin. All this was the very least in kind, degree, and duration, that a holy God could inflict, if sin was to be atoned for, and His own character maintained. Not one feeling of cruelty, not an iota of excess, not

a shadow of unnecessary severity, marked any part of the Saviour's sufferings. The Saviour Himself is the best judge of the wrath He underwent. Observe how He explained it. Prophecy introduced Him saying, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? *why art Thou so* far from helping me, *and from* the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent. But Thou *art* holy, O *Thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.' '*But Thou art holy!*' Thus He was to acquit His Father of all undue severity; and He did when He said, 'The cup which my Father gave me, shall I not drink it?' He did more than acquit Him; He approved of in the highest all that He underwent. '*My meat and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent me.*' Here then was the holiness of God; He made Him who knew no sin, a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 'Never, surely,' says one, 'should we lose the impression of the holiness of God, were we for a single instant to hear that piercing cry, "I am tormented in this flame;" but still more affecting was the cry heard in Gethsemane, when in bitterest anguish of distress the Son of God exclaimed, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Sinner! if a holy God could not spare His own holy Son, although His guilt was only imputed and not personal, He will not—he cannot spare thee, if thou remainest unholy; and unholy thou wilt remain, if thou flee not to Christ for salvation.'

And now observe how illustriously holiness was displayed in the acceptance and reward of the Saviour's finished work. If God expressed His hatred of sin by the humiliation of His Son, by His *exaltation* He equally proved His love of holiness. The same principle regulated His proceedings in both cases.

While the Saviour was fulfilling all righteousness (that is, all holiness) by His obedience, the holy Father could not conceal His love of this perfection, but exclaimed from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' When the Saviour had become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God highly exalted Him—giving Him a name above every name. When He had seated Him upon the throne of the universe, amidst the homage and gratitude of all worlds, He explained it thus: 'Thou lovedst righteousness and hatedst iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness.' Thus holiness goes the very same *lengths* in loving right as in hating wrong. The work of Christ, like the person of Christ, is perfectly holy; and therefore it meets with the perfection of the Father's delight. Yes; and sinners relying upon it for holy purposes, will find the *same* acceptance. While God remains holy, the righteousness of His Son can never fail to justify, in His sight, all who are clothed with it. Paul was sure of this, and therefore counted all things but loss, that he might be found in Christ.

I now notice the regenerating and sanctifying *operations* of God, as they illustrate His holiness.

The immediate and remote object of all divine operations upon the heart of sinners, is to renew them in righteousness and true holiness; to restore that beauty of holiness which was defaced by sin. And what a countless sum of these regenerating and sanctifying acts of the Eternal Spirit are going forward at this moment! On what a variety of character, conditions, and minds, are they operating! On the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, the savage and civilized; and in all and each, effecting the same change,—from sin to holiness, from vice to virtue, from ungodliness to godliness. Wonderful Spirit! thou art felt at once and alike here, and in all quarters of the globe; thou art for ever working on human hearts, and upon them all, to implant and promote holiness! For this noble purpose a perpetual act of omnipotence has been going on in souls since the fall—is going on now—and will go on until time be no more, and the church of the living God shall take her place before the throne, without spot or blemish, holy as God is holy. And is He not holy, who has thus appointed and employed the Holy Ghost to create, carry on, and perfect purity in the souls of all the heirs of salvation? Is He not holy, who conducts a special and perpetual providence, every act of which has for its direct object to make believers conformed to His

own holiness? If all things in nature clearly show the eternal power and Godhead, all things in grace and providence show to a certainty that God is glorious in holiness. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole universe is full of Thy glory!

CHAPTER VII.

MANLY AVOWALS OF IMMORTAL HOPES.

UNTIL '*the hope of glory*' acquire such an ascendancy in the modern as it had in the primitive church, no great impression will be made upon the world.

The first Christians knew and believed this hope, and therefore their faith laid hold upon all the glory that is 'laid up in heaven:' upon its honours as well as its ease, upon its raptures as well as its rest, upon its intellectual light as well as upon its moral loveliness. Their happiness so attracted the notice of others, as to excite general curiosity about the '*reason*' of the hope that produced it. Accordingly, all the primitive Christians were specially taught by the apostles, to expect so much inquiry into the real cause of their hope, that it became one of their chief duties to be 'ready always to give an answer to every man that asked for a reason of the hope which was in them.'

The bare mention of this fact will remind you, that the present aspect of hope amongst Christians in general, is neither so amazing nor commanding as to excite curiosity or compel inquiry after its *reasons*.

Were the hope of eternal life, as it is now held and exhibited by the church, to create a question in the world, that question, alas, must be: what is the reason that there is so little hope, so little heavenly-mindedness, and so much fear of death, amongst those who profess to believe the Gospel? The world does not, however, trouble the church with inquiries into the cause of doubts and fears, but is rather pleased than surprised to find that they prevail to a very great extent even amongst the truly pious. Thus, this want of positive enjoyment amongst Christians, like the defects of their character, becomes another convenient weapon for the world to wield against Godliness. 'What do I lose by neglecting religion, if that feeble and fluctuating hope is all that you have gained after years of Godliness?' said a gay young man to a venerable Christian, who was the victim of low spirits. This was not a fair question, when put to an infirm old man; nor can it fairly be put to any Christian at all times. It is, however, a question which those who want excuses will start, when they are hard pressed by their pious friends on the subject of personal religion.

And how few can answer it satisfactorily, by an appeal to the triumphs or tranquillity of their own hope! The time was, however (and why should it not return?), when neither the shrewdest nor the fiercest enemies of Christianity durst ask such a question. The church gave the world other work, and forced upon it the question: How are ye so happy? what is the reason of the hope that is in you?

The history of this period will repay your attention. It is something like this: whilst both the sentiments and character of the first Christians surprised their old companions who continued idolaters, it was their '*lively hope*' that excited most astonishment. Their religious opinions were felt to be singular, and their godly habits to be strange; but their hopes were utterly unaccountable: they were so many, and all so full of immortality, and thus so unlike the spirit of the age. That spirit, so far as it was philosophical, was atheistic; and so far as it was superstitious, its future prospects had no fascination for the old or the young. The weary eye of age or suffering could not repose on them for solace, nor the eagle eye of youth turn to them for inspiration. They deserved not, and therefore hardly obtained, the *name* of hopes, so destitute were they of all power to charm or cheer the human mind. Accordingly, the popular as well as the philosophic maxim was, '*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*'

In such a 'region and shadow of death,' even Athens and Rome stood. In this dark valley, both the learned and illiterate 'sat for ages,' looking at each other with despair or scorn. From time to time, some one started up, after profound study, and perambulated the valley, parading a new theory of mind, or matter, or morals, and for a time the hopeless spectators forgot their misery in the discussion of mystery. But they discussed only to discard; for as no theory of the universe or of religion brought any cheering hopes home to their bosoms, the people soon fell back upon

their old maxim, and sought relief from the cravings of their spirit, in the gratification of their senses. But when the apostles of the Lamb penetrated into this region and shadow of death, illuminating immortality by the Gospel, and throwing '*new heavens*' over the old earth, their appeal to 'what was in man,' and to what God had just done for man, by the cross of His Son and the sword of His Spirit, could not be disposed of so soon or so easily as abstract theories of morals had been. This was 'a new thing in the earth.' The Gospel laid hold upon all the soul's natural 'longings' after immortality, and addressed itself to all the points of the soul, at which the heart bled, or the conscience burned, or the understanding craved.

This appeal itself was, indeed, treated by the generality as a mere theory too for a time; but when here and there, all through the dark valley of heathenism, now a few, and anon many, began to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold upon the hope set before them in the Gospel, and to avow that hope as their own, and to stand ready to avouch it by their blood, then even the hopeless and hardened were absolutely amazed. And when mockery could not move, nor authority silence, nor martyrdom intimidate, the converts of the cross, 'the world turned upside down' with wonder. It scorned their opinions, and hated their principles; but it was staggered by their *hopes* in spite of itself, they were so new in their aspect, and so noble in their bearing, and so independent of all the usual motives which

had ever influenced the patience, the emulation, or the fortitude of mankind.

What was to be done? Sages pronounced Christianity to be visionary. Senators denounced it as sedition. Priesthoods arraigned it as impiety. Crowns rallied armies to crush it. But all in vain! When these forces moved in phalanx against it, they could somewhat hinder it from spreading on the spot where they battled; but even there, they could not quench its spirit in the hearts of its votaries, nor prevent the heroism of its martyrdom from winning new martyrs. The more the world fought, the more the church conquered; for the children of hope 'sang praises unto God' in all their prisons, shouted victory at the stake, and smiled composure at the tribunal. Even women 'waxed valiant,' beyond the daring of Socrates, and slaves proved that emperors could not shackle spirits which Christ had made free. Christians of all ranks recognised only the chariots of God, in the kindling flames; only rivers hastening to the sea of glory, in the engulphing waters; only signals of a summons to heaven, in the flashing swords of persecutors. At length, the state was glad to stay the carnage, that it might save the empire; for headsmen actually wearied of wielding the axe, and soldiers of brandishing the sword, and jailors of riveting chains, and spies of detecting victims, and servants of kindling faggots, and judges of signing sentences, and emperors of issuing edicts of extermination: all were wearied out long before the church complained.

A hope that thus defied and defeated the world, could not be overlooked. Accordingly, public curiosity began to inquire into its *reasons*, when imperial vengeance could no longer afford to make war against its votaries. And then Christianity began to triumph gloriously. Every man had been stirred up to ask a reason for the hope it inspired, and every Christian stood ready to give a reason for it; and thus all the church became, virtually, preachers of the Gospel. 'The Spirit and the Bride,' as well as the Spirit and the ministry, said to the world, 'Come and take of the water of life freely.'

That this is a fair report of the case needs no other proof than the fact, that these are the express words of 'Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness.' He bowed the heavens, after His ascension, to testify that the bride said 'Come,' and that the invitation which the church thus gave to the world was, like His own preaching, first and chiefly, a call to lay hold on the hope of eternal life, or to drink of the water of life freely. Thus there was more than *ministerial* effort and influence brought to bear upon the world. Ministers could do no more than point to 'a RIVER of the water of life,' proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, and flowing openly down to the earth; they could point also to thousands standing all along its banks, who did more than admire it, more than compliment it, more than wish to drink of it, yea, more than hope to drink of it: they *had* drank so abundantly of its living waters that they could not

thirst again for sinful enjoyments, nor cease to long to drink of this river at its fountain-head in heaven. Thus there came from all the churches, both a loud echo to the ministerial invitations of the Gospel, and a living exemplification of the immediate and immortal advantages of complying with them. And neither the echo nor the example was overlooked by the world. The Corinthian Christians were an '*epistle, known and read of all men.*' The faith of the Romans was '*spoken of throughout the whole world.*' And the word of the Lord so 'sounded out' from the Thessalonians, that their 'God-ward' and heaven-ward faith was '*spread abroad everywhere,*' and so spoke for itself, that Paul said, 'we need not to speak anything.'

This was the aspect and spirit of Christian hope, then, upon the earthly banks of the river of life. That aspect was solemn, but not sad: that spirit 'meek,' but not timid. Hope embraced such an '*exceeding weight*' of eternal glory, that it could neither be flippant nor cowardly, silent nor talkative, ostentatious nor shrinking, obtrusive nor ashamed. No; it partook largely of both the solemnity and the loveliness of the immortality of which it was so full; and as it had filled itself at that urn, at the risk of life, and in the presence of all the forms of martyrdom, it breathed the spirit of its fountain and its fate.

Now, this is just what is wanted in the world at present, an abounding of hope which cannot be overlooked, nor passed by unquestioned, nor be suspected

of vanity or imbecility. And, surely, if it could abound equally 'in all boldness' and '*in all wisdom and prudence*,' on the banks of the river of life, even when the waters reflected the flash of hostile arms, and the glare of threatening flames, it need not tremble, nor temporise, nor vapour, now that the sword is sheathed and the fire quenched. Why, then, is there so little of this 'good hope through grace' to be seen or heard of in the churches, the families, and the social circles of the pious? The grace which warrants it, is not less full or free now, than it was when Christian hope amazed the world. And yet the degree of hope usually taken from that grace now, arrests no public attention, and creates but little private inquiry. Children do not hear it from their parents, nor servants from their masters, nor friends from each other. Even husband and wife hardly venture to breathe it in a whisper to each other. Indeed, were not what is preached and written on the hope of glory, illustrated from time to time by happy *death-beds*, much of it would be unintelligible, so little is there said or done to illustrate it in the ordinary intercourse of life.

'The death of the righteous' does still, however, prove to the world that there *is* hope in the church, and that 'hope maketh not ashamed' when the last struggle comes. I beg your best attention to this fact, that you may not suppose that there is no hope in the church, or that what there is is useless. There is enough to maintain the credit of Christianity as

the only antidote against the fear of death. Christians may carry their silence up to the very entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, but they do not pass 'through' it in silence. Hope finds its tongue, and its harp too, when *in* the valley. This is so common, in the case of consistent believers, that the old challenge,—'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace,'—may be safely given to all the world, and unhesitatingly coupled with a defiance to all, to find one instance of an upright man dying in horror, or despair, or darkness, when his disease left his faculties unimpaired in their rational exercise. Accordingly, even the Balaams of gain and gaiety do not question the fact, that the righteous hath hope in his death. They even keep up the prayer, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Why is this prayer thus kept up in the world? Obviously because the church keeps up an everlasting succession of death-beds, where the sting of death is lost, and the victory of the grave forgotten; and because these signal triumphs over the king of terrors cannot be entirely overlooked or forgotten by mankind. They are not, indeed, much looked at nor often remembered from choice, but *necessity* keeps them in sight. The world cannot *afford* to forget them. See how it repeats the last words of Addison, 'Behold how calmly a Christian can die.' Even in the theatre, where amusement is the sole object, and all things are of the earth, earthy, neither the vicious nor the vain can

help responding with applause to the exclamation,

'There is another and a better world.'

Not that they love that world; but they all fear death, and cannot suppress the desire of future happiness. No man can, at all times, whatever be his tastes or pursuits. The worse these are, the weaker he is when he looks the last enemy in the face. His own face may not betray this secret, and his lips may deny the fact; but he feels it, however he may mask or vapour, smile or swear. The mortality of his body necessitates this mood of the spirit when decay begins; and where vice has hastened that decay, the sinking of the spirit hurries it on, by fits and qualms, which upset all hardihood while they last.

Thus the world can no more *afford* to lose sight of all the instances of hope in death, than the church could afford to do so. Very few of them, and these not the best, suffice for the world to talk about; but still it must have one or more to quote, whenever it must say something about death, or listen to the voice of nature within. Indeed, mankind are rather glad than otherwise, to know that many 'depart in peace.' The bare fact is, however, enough for the generality. They take no interest in the grounds of that peace, and would hardly listen to the details of it. As peace founded on the blood of the Cross, or confirmed by the witness of the Spirit, or perfected by foretastes of heaven, many would laugh at it, but simply as peace in death they are pleased to hear of it. It gets such another place in the temples of taste, fashion, and

trade, as the Romans would have given to a statue of Christ in the Pantheon of their idols.

I thus apprize you of the precise temperament of mankind on the subject of exchanging worlds. No man is always nor altogether at ease in his own mind. Every man has his awful moments in spite of himself. His 'flesh' will not let him alone, even if his 'spirit' would spare him. His constitution breaks down, even if his conscience do not break out upon him. It cannot be otherwise whilst man is mortal!

This is no sweeping assertion. If it seem so to you, you have not looked attentively at the world. True, you see the crowd on 'the broad way' keep up its numbers, and its noise, and its pursuits, as if all was ease and enjoyment. The places of those who sink or retire are so soon filled up, that you can hardly distinguish the change of persons. But there is a change of *persons* for ever going on. Now, if you will mark, and follow into retirement, those who can no longer keep their wonted place in the crowd, you will soon discover that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' and that, however they have figured in the world, a time comes when they are tired out and must retreat; when their hearts ache, and misgive them; when their sins drop the mask, and disgust them; when an earthly portion is felt to be an empty portion; when conscience will not lie still, nor the visions of eternity depart at a bidding.

To this point all men come at last, and alas, when they are here, there is, in general, little access to them.

Dying Christians cannot be taken to them to exemplify hope in death; living Christians are seldom admitted to them to explain the way of salvation; and they themselves can make nothing of Addison's example, nor of dramatic sentimentalities, on the subject of peace or hope in death. Thus, they have to die as they can, or just as it happens, and whether that be in agony or in stupor, it is a 'fool's death.'

If ever the world, therefore, is to be *savingly* benefited by the church, more than 'hope in death' must be exemplified in the church; for the multitude cannot be admitted nor the trifling enticed into

> 'The chamber where the good man meets
> His fate.'

It is as much as a dying Christian can well bear, to see his own family and his intimate friends. Thus the world is inevitably shut out from witnessing the best triumphs of hope. Unless, therefore, Christian hope be allowed and made to '*shine before men*,' where they can all see it and examine it, it cannot tell effectually nor widely. Besides, its final triumphs, however true and frequent, if not preceded by some tokens of present enjoyment from religion, will give currency to the delusion, that the death of the righteous may be secured at last by a dying effort, without living the life of the righteous. Thus, by suppressing her hope, or by having too little to show, the church practically, however unintentionally, connives at errors which all her creed condemns.

This matter now wears a serious aspect to all who are concerned to stand clear of 'blood-guiltiness,' when they stand confronted with the souls of their neighbours at the bar of God. It is not impossible, however, to clear ourselves of the blood of all men with whom we have any intercourse. Our responsibilities do not involve violations of the charities or the courtesies of life. It was not by intruding themselves upon the privacy of their neighbours, nor by forcing their religious opinions into the business of the world, that the first Christians discharged their conscience. They cherished all the hope warranted by the Gospel, and modelled their character by that hope, and stood prepared to give a reason for all the grace and glory they expected; and this line of conduct led men to inquire about a Gospel which had such a holy and happy influence upon its adherents. Thus, their hopes created both opportunities and facilities for winning souls. Now it is no great hardship, surely, to be bound to take up a hope full of present grace and future glory. It may not, at first sight, seem easy to hope for all that God has promised, but it is really easier to do so than to keep up a hope only *half* full of immortality. Now we are warranted to pray for all and to expect all that Christ has provided for happiness in this life, and in that which is to come. The Gospel does not present a *title* to heaven unto one, and but a *peradventure* of heaven unto another; does not invite one class to a lively hope, and another to a languid hope of eternal

life. It opens all the riches of the new covenant on earth, and all the beatific vision of the New Jerusalem in heaven, to all men alike. You are therefore just as welcome to embrace the whole, as you are warranted to expect any part of the great salvation. Nothing but the blood of Christ warrants any hope; and that blood warrants unbounded hope of all needful grace, and of all revealed glory.

Now, with such a hope, do you not see and feel how it must give a tone to your spirit and conversation, and a character to your doing and suffering, that could not be overlooked nor laughed at? Whining or canting *talk* about heaven, is a most unheavenly thing; but when *actions* speak, when temper speaks, when integrity speaks, when patience speaks of heaven, the world will both look and listen with respect. They know the worth of sterling honesty, and they feel their own want of contentment and peace of mind; and, therefore, when they see these things *based* upon a bright eternity, and yet leaning naturally and prudently upon all the helps of reason, law, and religion, they cannot suppress all curiosity nor forget the sight. Even the infidel press of France could not pass by without notice the simple-hearted but solemn remark of a French Christian, who said, on refusing to be a party to some questionable transaction in business, 'I could never forget it, nor forgive myself, even in heaven.'

And why should not every Christian refer with as much simplicity to his anticipations of his eternal

opinions and prospects? Where is the real difficulty of having his immortal hopes as closely around him as his moral principles, that thus he might see at a glance how any act or habit of this life will *look*, during the untold and interminable cycles of the life to come? He is not ashamed to base upon law, conscience, and character, refusals to sin or circumvent. He dare not conceal from the world his subjection to moral obligation. And he ought not to conceal the fact that his immortal hopes, as well as his moral principles, influence all his transactions.

Not, however, by the manifestation of such a hope, does the church now try to win the world. And yet she is neither idle nor indifferent, neither illiberal nor unenterprising at present. All real Christians are doing something, both at home and abroad, to win souls. Ingenuity is taxed to simplify and adapt the forms of knowledge to minds of all orders, and conditions of all grades. Benevolence provides something for all kinds of misery, and philanthropy espouses the cause of all the oppressed. History begins to remember the forgotten, and to vindicate the calumniated martyrs of civil and religious liberty. Even poetry pays some homage to the genius of Christianity, and is compelled to pitch her key-note in harmony with the tone of Christian morals. No bench dare avow infidelity, nor any senator assail the Bible. Even the press must bow to the majesty of revelation, however it may tamper or temporize with some revealed truths.

Now all this influence the church of the living God has put forth upon the world. Yes; Christians have done it in this country. It has been their influence, however unacknowledged or unseen, that has kept the march of intellect upon the highways of truth; that has kept the streams of knowledge in the channels of virtue; that has kept the progress of liberty on the side of religion. Things are not so in France. No political movement there has led to any great moral result, even when the policy was wise, and the public spirit noble, in themselves. Why? There was not Christianity enough in France to regulate or influence the movements. They had not only no immortal hope to centre in, but no moral system to support. Indeed, they had nothing to terminate upon, but just the *temporal* purposes for which they were undertaken: and no liberty can be lasting, nor satisfactory whilst it lasts, which is not made to bear upon the glory of God, and the eternal welfare of mankind.

I thus refer to the influence of Christian principle on the spirit and manners of the age at home, to prove that the church of Christ is neither inactive nor useless. She makes herself felt, if not heard, in all the assemblies and associations of the land. They do not and dare not forget that there is holy fire upon ten thousand of her altars, and millions of holy men within her spiritual pale, who would guard these altars with their life, if that fire were in danger. This is much, but it is not enough. It tells widely and

well upon morals and legislation and social order, but not directly upon the human heart. It is a mighty impulse upon masses of society, but not upon *individual* men. Individuals must act upon individuals, if ever personal religion become universal. The great charm of true religion is, the *happiness* it confers; and that happiness cannot be fully seen in the fellowship of a church, nor even in the peace of a family. There is, indeed, happiness in both these spheres, but not that precise *form* of it which every man appreciates at first sight, and which all men feel their need of at times. The fact is (and it is solemn enough to be repeated), every man is occasionally a *wretched* man. Whatever may be his tastes or pursuits, and however he may appear satisfied or absorbed with them, there are moments of satiety, of disgust, of *heart-sickness* and *heart-sinking*, which compel him to confess to himself that he is wretched; that neither gain nor gaiety has answered his expectations; that all is vanity and vexation of spirit! Now, during these awful moments and humiliating emotions, recollections of God and eternity do force themselves in upon the conscience. Their terrific flash may be as momentary as the glare of the midnight thunderbolt; but it is as startling too, whilst it lasts, and not entirely forgotten when it is gone. The man himself can see the traces of it on his brow in the morning, although no one else can detect them. He feels also more than a bad headache, or the sleepless night he complains of: his soul is as *feverish* as his body.

Now it is *that* form of happiness which could remove this gnawing uneasiness, and prevent its return, that such a man requires to see; but that form of happiness he cannot see, if there be no one in the circle of his acquaintance manifesting the beauty of hope, as well as 'the beauty of holiness.'

Why should not these twin-beauties be combined in *your* character? You know young men, and old men too, who are unhappy. You are sure, from their habits, that they cannot be otherwise than wretched at times; and you see that they will not *brook* reproof nor warning. Must they, therefore, be left to perish? At your peril, do not allow yourself to regard your old school-fellow or former friend as hopeless. He may have lost his character, but he has not lost *sight* of you, even if he shun you. It may be unsafe for you to associate with him much or openly, but, as you do cross each other's path from time to time, you can, by acquiring and manifesting a hope full of immortality, awaken his curiosity to the *secret* of your personal happiness. You may thus save more souls than your own, for 'he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MANLY VIEWS OF FAITH.

FAITH is as much the first and chief principle of all the business of life, as it is of all the duties of Godliness. No men *act* more by faith, in pursuing their temporal avocations and objects, than those who speak most against faith as the grand principle of religion. This glaring inconsistency would be ludicrous, were not its consequences fatal. It is, however, 'passing strange' that men who can neither live nor move without faith in men or things, should yet make light of faith when God and truth, salvation and eternity, are the objects of it. These solemn and sublime objects deserve, surely, quite as much faith as the temporal things which make both public and social life '*a life of faith*,' in the order of nature, in the laws of nations, in the grounds of commerce, and in the promises of mankind. The confidence given to these things may not, indeed, be always called faith (although even that is its usual name both in trade and treaties), but it really is faith. How, then, would the mockers at religious faith like to be pitied or despised for their faith in

food and medicine, in bills and bonds, in ships and mails, in banks and firms? They can neither trade nor travel without faith. They buy and sell by faith. They eat and drink by faith. In a word, they can do no business without it, nor have any enjoyment apart from it; for were they to give up their faith in the ordinary integrity of mankind, or in the nutritiousness of the fruits of the earth, they must give up, too, both the means and the pursuits of life. And yet men of business and men of pleasure, and even literary men, can so far forget all the decencies of common sense and decorum, as to laugh at faith, or try to be witty at its expense, when it is enforced as the first and chief thing in religion! Is this manly or fair?

I will not retaliate upon them by ridiculing their strong faith in each other, and in all the general laws which regulate human policy, trade, enterprise, and social life. Natural, national, and mutual faith is too essential to the welfare of mankind, to be less than sacred in the estimation of a Christian. The world may laugh at his faith in the things which are unseen and eternal, but he will not make light of their faith in the things which are seen and temporal. I do, however, claim the right of telling the world in plain terms that they play with a two-edged sword when they make light of *divine* faith. If they do not know, they ought to know, that divine faith is just such a degree of confidence in divine things, as they themselves *give* to temporal things, and expect to *get* from

Christians in the business of life. If, therefore, they would not teach us to distrust themselves, and to treat all their own veracity as doubtful, why should they arraign, as useless or visionary, our faith in the character and word of God? For if there be anything weak in the habit of trusting Him, there must be egregious folly in trusting them. If there be nothing wrong nor rash in disbelieving God, there can be no great harm in disbelieving any man and every man.

You cannot dislike this 'retort courteous;' and yet, perhaps, you do not see clearly the analogy between human and divine faith. You may even suspect that the parallels would not hold good, but break down, if it were pursued very far; and thus you may feel afraid to employ the argument. Look, however, at the facts again. You know the confidence which farmers have in the order of nature, and merchants in commercial treaties, and all men in established capital and character. There are momentary *panics* in all the markets; but business still goes on somewhere. Now, did the farmer place as much confidence in the promise of the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, as he gives to the promise of 'the early and latter rain,' would not that be *faith* in God? And, did the merchant repose only as much confidence in the Saviour, as he places in his bankers and agents, would not that be faith in Christ? I do not, of course, mean that it would be *all* the faith which God and the Lamb demand and deserve. It would, however, be

some, and so much as *must* lead to more. And, let any man who has entire confidence in any human security, give entire confidence to divine promises, what would that be but 'strong faith'? Thus, all the difference between natural and divine *faith*, is made by the difference between human and divine *things*, and by the difference there is between human and divine *agency*. It is not, however, by any new or occult mental faculty that a man begins to believe the Gospel; but by new motives and influences acting on his old faculties. He then believes eternal things, just as he had before believed temporal things. His faith is no longer confined to this world, but extends to the eternal world. It has new objects, and quite another kind of influence than it had, whilst it terminated on the things of time and sense; but it is not a new mental process. It is still the old or natural act of believing, drawn out and led on by the Spirit of God, to new and nobler truths and purposes. A true believer is, therefore, just thinking, and reasoning, and judging, and trusting, as naturally and freely as to the mental process in the case of eternal things, as worldly-wise men do in the case of earthly things. I mean he is not doing more or otherwise in regard to eternity, than they are doing in regard to time. Alas, the only difference is, that he does *less* in the work of believing God, than they do in the work of believing man. It is therefore no more weak, visionary, fanatical, or irrational, to extend

to all revealed truth, than it is to believe the ascertained facts of science and history, or the pledged word of well accredited men. '*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater,*' greater in itself, and in all that it testifies.

This view of faith, and the argument founded upon it, being derived from the express 'words which the Holy Ghost teacheth,' cannot be at variance with the *work* of the Holy Ghost in producing faith. The line of argument is at variance only with those vague and mystical notions about faith, which perplex the serious and harden the slothful. Faith is, indeed, '*not of ourselves,*' it is the gift of God, a fruit of the Spirit, an effect of 'divine operation.' It is also, however, the *duty* of man. If it were not, unbelief would not be a sin, and especially not the condemning sin. That, however, it is; and therefore we are as much accountable for our faith as for our practice. No wonder: the grounds of accountability for *what* and *how* we believe, are as firmly laid in the everlasting Gospel, as the grounds of it for what and how we obey, are laid in the eternal law. The Gospel presents truth to us, as clearly as the law presents duty; and therefore it demands faith, just as the law demands obedience, and with equal reason too. Law is the *judicial* will of God: Gospel is the *gracious* will of God; and surely it cannot be less our duty or interest to believe the latter, than it is to obey the former. The former reveals to us the legislative character of God, and the latter His paternal character; and as He has

condescended to sustain all the pity and love of a father towards the human family, notwithstanding all their guilt and ingratitude, well may He expect and demand, that they should believe this fact with the heart, and give implicit credit and entire confidence to all its revealed reasons and designs.

Let no man deceive you, neither let your own sloth betray you into quibbles about faith. The impossibility of believing the Gospel without the grace of the Holy Spirit, is exactly such an impossibility as the growth of grain without sunshine and showers: it no more sets aside or lessens your obligation to '*sow unto the Spirit*,' than the other absolves the farmer from the duty of ploughing and sowing his fields. The influences of the Spirit in producing faith, are like the influences of the heavens in producing corn; neither supply *seed*, nor supplant human *labour*, and both operate agreeably to the nature of the seed and the soil. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd or impertinent, than to plead as an apology for the want of faith, that the Holy Spirit has not given you grace to believe. Grace to believe *what?* yes, what do you wish to believe? If not the Gospel, He gives no grace to believe anything else. And if it be the Gospel you wish to believe with the heart, *acquaint* yourself with it, if you would have Him to work mightily or effectually. His grace gives power to His truth.

What attention, then, do you give to the Gospel itself? I mean to the Gospel as '*glad news*' from heaven to earth. It is, indeed, a system of truth as

opposed to error; and a system of morality as opposed to vice; and a system of worship as opposed to idolatry and superstition; and a system of grace as opposed to merit; but it is all this just because it is glad tidings of a great salvation; and therefore it is not heard or read *aright*, until heard and read as good news in a bad world, or as a message of tender mercy, direct from the eternal throne to the unworthy. Now, is it thus you have attended to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God? You may have studied it as a creed, as a controversy, as a system of faith and practice; but if you have not weighed it as 'the joyful sound' of a pardon you need, of a deliverance from wrath you deserve, of a title to glory you desire, you have not yet treated it as gospel, but as law, or advice, or as theology.

This is the chief reason why so many who hear the Gospel with some attention and much respect, yet remain year after year without the Spirit. They hear as judges of sound doctrine, as friends of good morals, as umpires between orthodoxy and heresy, as men of sense, or men of science, or men of taste, or men of business, or as family-men; but not as *sinners* who deserve none of the mercy they need. Now, how can the Spirit of God be expected to countenance this spirit in man? As the Spirit of truth, He is not indifferent to the fear of error; as the Spirit of holiness, not indifferent to the love of virtue; as the Spirit of wisdom, not indifferent to good sense or good taste: but He is also 'the Spirit of Christ;' and

as His grand object is to glorify Christ as a Saviour from hell and sin, how can He follow with a saving blessing, any attention to the Gospel which is not for the sake of an *immediate* salvation from the wrath to come?

Here, now, is the point. If you are concerned only about a *remote* or *final* salvation, you are offering a *present insult* to the God of salvation, for He beseeches you to be reconciled to Him now, because 'now' is the only day of salvation that you can calculate upon as 'the accepted time.' You are offering a present insult to the Lamb of God: for although He '*now* liveth to intercede,' He has made no promise to take up your cause at a future period. A regard only to a remote salvation, is also a present insult to the Spirit of God; for 'the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear my voice.' Thus, remote intentions, however good or sincere, are present insults to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and *can* the Spirit countenance such conduct? Is it any wonder that He does not give grace to help, whilst there is no intention of making a present use of it? Why should He, or indeed, how *could* He work faith in your heart, if you have no wish nor design to exercise it, until you are older or in greater danger of death?

I do not forget the *sovereignty* of the Spirit's influences. That sacred 'wind bloweth' both *when* and *where* it listeth. But I remember also, that it is not promised to blow at all upon any one who hears the Gospel merely as a present creed, or as a future com-

mand. Besides, if you can *judge* of its claims to credence as doctrine, and of its beauty as morality, and of its sublimity as philosophy, and of its truth as history, you can do *more* than all this, you can weigh its claims upon yourself as a sinner and a candidate for eternity; for you have a *conscience* as well as an understanding, and if you would not dare to silence your reason, nor your taste, nor your judgment, when the truth, beauty, and holiness of Christianity are brought before you, why should you not allow your conscience to speak out, when the refuge and remedy of the Gospel are commended? You yourself see and feel that it would be an insult to the Holy Spirit, to expect Him to countenance levity or wilful ignorance. You do not expect that, nor wish for it. You are not unwilling to let the *general* truths of the Gospel have a fair hearing, nor to allow them to have some weight on your mind, and some influence on your character. Nothing you know or feel about your need of *grace*, leads you to lay aside your *talents* when you read or hear the Gospel. Why, then, lay aside your *conscience*? I mean, why not let it speak out, when the necessity and suitableness of *saving* blessings are proved, as well as let reason speak out when the *truth* of Christianity is proved? The chief value of the historical truth of the Gospel is, that it justifies faith in its joyful sound; and as conscience can judge as well of the *goodness* of the glad news of salvation, as reason can of their truth, it is as criminal not to employ conscience, as it is not to employ common sense.

Let conscience speak now. It is not altogether easy. It is not without some fears and forebodings. There is more guilt upon it than you would like your friends or the world to know. That guilt, even after all your own softenings and subterfuges, casts a dark shadow upon the swellings of Jordan, and upon the judgment-seat beyond them. You cannot contemplate with anything like composure, the *opening* of 'the books' on the great white throne, nor the transition of your naked spirit from the death-bed to the tribunal. Although not worse than many, and even better than some, you are conscious that you are not prepared to meet God, nor yet to inherit glory. There is thus darkness upon your future prospects, and suspense on your spirit. And then you see what many do not look at, that it will require strong faith '*some day*' to get over such fears. Accordingly, you intend, what many do not, to make a believing application to the blood of atonement for pardon and acceptance. You have no intention of risking your soul at last, upon a late repentance or a legal reformation. You design and desire to be indebted to Christ for salvation, whenever you proceed to act out your convictions of truth and duty.

Thus, your conscience has already discovered that it *will* want the glad tidings of the Gospel, and is now somewhat gladdened to remember that there is something in the Cross worth looking at and relying on. And are you not as much bound to apply this conscience to the study of the Gospel's *worthiness* of all

acceptation, as to apply your understanding to the faithfulness of its testimony? You say to yourself, 'I am a rational being, and must not reject evidence; I am an accountable being, and must not trifle with truth; I am a being equally mortal and immortal, and must not entirely peril myself in time or eternity:' but why not add, 'I am a guilty being, and need pardon now; I am an unholy being, and need sanctification now.' This is equally true, and far more solemn than the general fact, that it is wrong to be irreligious.

And do you not see that this way of attending to the Gospel is just the way to meet the Holy Spirit? He can *own* and *honour* such consideration of the things which belong to your peace; whereas, whilst you consider them only as they belong to your talents, and taste, and character, He cannot witness, and has not promised to work with you. True, He wrought mightily upon those who first heard the Gospel, although they had not gone through any such process of thought as I am now enforcing upon you. At Pentecost, and on other occasions of apostolic preaching, thousands were led into the faith of the Gospel, as fast as they acquired the knowledge of it. They heard with the ear, and were enabled to believe with the heart, on the same day. I will not evade this fact by calling it miraculous. If, however, you mean to insinuate that those who believed then, went through *no* process of consideration beforehand, you have yet to study the apostolic history of both the Jews and

the Gentiles. That the first converts went through no such process as I commend to you, is indeed quite certain. But remember, all Judea had been shaken by the fear of the wrath to come, under the rousing ministry of John the Baptist; and all the people of Jerusalem who beheld the solemnities of Calvary, '*smote their breast and returned.*' Was this no preparation for Pentecost? Thus, so far as Jews believed on that day, they had both thought and felt too beforehand. And as to the Gentiles, you may well be thankful that you have no such process of thought or feeling to go through, as heathenism forced upon them.

That was not, indeed, a *softening* process, any farther than suffering tends to soften the heart; and that is not far, when nothing else co-operates. Still, *misery*, as well as meditation, is calculated to prepare the mind for the glad tidings of eternal happiness. *Wretchedness*, as well as reflection, can draw attention to good news, and teach something of the value of a remedy. Now wretchedness must have been as common as vice throughout the heathen world. This is no conjecture. The time is gone by when sciolists could dupe the common sense of mankind by pictures of happiness amongst idolaters. It is now an ascertained fact (as might have been anticipated from the very nature of the human mind), that no heathen nation is happy. The most ignorant and savage are found to be *restless*, even when reckless. A mysterious dread haunts the spirit of the hunter in the wilderness,

and of the cannibal of the islands. Yea, they seek more than the gratification of *appetite*, when they sell everything for intoxicating liquors. Their craving for excitement is not simply *animal* desire; there is *conscience* in it, although they cannot define it, nor we analyze it. How much more must this have been the case amongst the civilized heathen of Greece and Rome! He sees only the surface of men and things, who does not feel that the very splendour of heathen temples, altars, and sacrifices, is as much the measure of the people's *consciousness* of guilt and fear, as it is the measure of their vanity, folly, taste, or genius. Men never impoverish nor tax themselves for any religion, without a *moral* reason, based in the fears and misgivings of their hearts. God, who knows 'what is in man,' has assured us that they were 'without hope in the world;' that they were all 'their lifetime in bondage, through fear of death.' Now this, with the uncertainty and practical inefficiency which hung over all their loftiest speculations, formed, not indeed a softening process of preparation for the Gospel, but still a preparation, inasmuch as it was *experience* of the insufficiency of all human things to confer happiness.

Thus you have no reason to grudge the thought or prayer, which your better circumstances render the best process for obtaining grace. It is an easy process compared with the remorse of the Jews, or with the bitter experience of the Gentiles. Remember, therefore, that both had been on the *rack* of suspense and fear before they heard the Gospel; and that this

is one reason why so many of them 'received the word gladly' when they first heard it. This, indeed, was not the only nor the chief reason of their prompt and cordial belief of the Gospel. That was emphatically the fruit of the Spirit; but still, not apart from the means of grace, or from the measures of Providence. Divine influence did not follow those who fled from the preaching of the Gospel, nor act on those who braved all the discipline of Providence.

Now, see what encouragements and facilities *you* have for believing the Gospel fully. I mean for believing its 'joyful sound.' Let nothing divert your attention from its 'glad tidings of great joy.' Systematize its doctrines into a creed if you will, or adopt as your confession of faith whatever formula you reckon most scriptural; but do not substitute this *theologizing* for believing the message of mercy which the Gospel brings to you. That 'is your life,' and upon it your faith and hope should fix, as the condemned criminal's fix upon the royal message of pardon. That is his first and chief object of attention. He may afterwards admire the seal and the style of the document, but for a time he is absorbed with the grand subject of it. His life was in jeopardy and his heart in fear, and *that* relieved both at once. Your soul is in greater peril, whether your heart be equally afraid or not; and nothing can relieve either from eternal pain, but the cordial belief of the glorious Gospel.

Again I say, 'in understanding be men.' You can-

not but see that all the truths which the gay and the giddy, the heedless and the heartless, refuse to believe now, they *must* believe when they stand at the bar of God. But then belief can do no good. It can do good now. No one ever *tried* to believe the Gospel in vain.

CHAPTER IX.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF SELF-CONSECRATION.

'We must run, glittering like a brook in the open sunshine,
Or we are unblest.'

THIS is emphatically true of all minds, and especially of great minds. Great objects are necessary for them. For what purpose? That great minds may not prey upon themselves. Unemployed and misapplied talents are sure to revenge themselves upon their possessors. They will not die in the mind, like lightning in a cloud, without injuring their sanctuary or losing their energy, but will impair at once their shrine and themselves. Great powers were created for great purposes; and, when not applied to them, they assail each other, like wild beasts in a cage. Memory keeps conscience sleepless, and imagination torments both. The visions of fancy become the realities of sensation. The brain burns sensibly, and the palpitations of the heart are the pulsations of the soul. Thoughts are substances, and feelings convulsions.

Men of some talent, and of much taste, when they witness these woes of genius, feel thankful that they themselves are not geniuses; and prefer infinitely their own healthy sensations and orderly conceptions, to all the sublime flights and brilliant flashes of morbid power. Well they may! An orbit like the comet's is, indeed, fascinating, by the vastness of its sweep and the variety of its scenery; but a mind with the motion and character of a comet is no enviable distinction. Better shine like the faintest star of the galaxy, than blaze like the meteors of the universe.

There is, however, no essential nor inseparable tendency to morbid disease in great mental powers. It is not by any law of their nature that they run wild. Accordingly, when they are so engrossed with great *public* objects, that self is absorbed in pure philanthropy, they work well. The moment a great man ceases to be his *own centre*, he begins to enjoy himself; and whenever he forgets himself on behalf of mankind, his powers move as regularly as the stars in the firmament, without tarnishing the beauty or disturbing the repose of their sanctuary. The reason is obvious: they find in real philanthropy a sphere commensurate with their might, and even *surpassing* it. It is this that restores and establishes the balance of great mental powers. They cease to be felt, or to appear *too* great, whenever the field of moral desolation opens in all its width and woes. Idolatry, slavery, and superstition, when

understood, impose upon the mightiest mind, not exactly such a sense of its own weakness as renders their overthrow hopeless, but such a conviction of the inadequacy of all mere human power to overthrow them, as the ocean in a storm produces of the insufficiency of any human power to calm it. Talents are thus brought to their real level, as well as into their proper element, when fairly confronted with, and committed upon, the grand and eternal interests of the world. It is the too *little*, not the too *much* of power that is then felt. The greatest rocks, in common with 'the sands' upon the shores of the aggressive sea of evil, feel their own insufficiency to repel its waves.

This is a conviction which nothing else can produce. The ordinary pursuits are so ordinary, that they only inflate the consciousness of mental power. One man could produce sermons which would eclipse all the triumphs of the pulpit; another, speeches which would electrify a public meeting; another, a book which would immortalize him: but they do not. Why? They think it beneath them to appear in the arena of emulation. So it would, if the effect terminated wholly or chiefly in their own fame. To be the first preacher, the first orator, or the first writer of his age, is a distinction unworthy of a great man to covet on its own account. In this connection his mind would as soon weary of it, as his head would of wearing the iron crown of Charlemagne. It would be more than an incumbrance; it would prove a

curse, by throwing his mighty powers in upon himself, and loose upon each other. He might soon become a *dram-drinker*, from utter sickness of his own fame. But let the same man espouse one or more of the grand moral interests of the world at large, and identify his being and his bliss with it for time and eternity, and make his purpose of carrying it his fate, and hold *it* to be *himself*,—what aspect, then, would the pulpit, the platform, and the press wear to him? Not that of arenas to shrink from or to be ashamed of, but vantage grounds on which to exhibit, not himself, but prostrate and perishing millions crying out for liberty and salvation. Let the man who wishes to hide himself, put *them* forward, and he will soon cease to think of himself, or to be thought of, except as their representative. How impossible it is to conceive of Wilberforce, or Howard, or Martyn, as thinking of *himself*, or of what others might think of his *talents*, whilst he was planning and pleading for the welfare of mankind! What fills the public eye or the public ear, when these great names are mentioned? The *causes* they espoused; the *misery* they represented; the *triumphs* they achieved. Wilberforce is only another name for African liberty; Howard, another name for philanthropy; and Martyn, Williams, and Moffat, other names for missions. Why, then, are there not more names of note equally identified with these noble enterprises, and absorbed in them? It is not a sermon preached officially, nor a speech extorted by force, nor a solitary pam-

phlet upon an emergency, that amounts to an espousal of the cause of God and man. If that cause be worth anything, it is worth more than countenance, or an occasional official effort. It demands and deserves high and habitual enthronement in the minds of great men. But, alas! it is not thus enthroned by many of them. In reference to the paramount interest of the world at large, the parable of 'The Talents' is often reversed. Many who have received 'ten talents' bury them in the earth; whilst many who have but 'one talent' gain, by its wise application, the plaudit of the Judge. Only a few of the great minds of the age are thoroughly *engrossed* with the great enterprises of the age. Many profound thinkers live only to think. Some of our best writers write least. Most of the fine imaginations waste their creative power upon worthless objects; and, like amber, embalm *flies*. And, 'verily, they have their reward!'

In the case of *perverted* talent, that reward is often fearful. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' succeed unhallowed speculations; and, occasionally, the 'outer darkness' of reason is both the natural and judicial consequence of unholy theorizing. Even 'unprofitable servants' do not escape with impunity. They, too, have their depressions and hallucinations, their days of darkness and nights of horror. The lava-flow of their blood, and the soul-withering glare of their visions, are as much realities as the remorse and fear of a guilty conscience. Our sympathy with men of genius, when they suffer thus, must not shut our

eyes to the causes of this self-torment. If they have thought deeply, only for the sake of deep thinking; or speculated wantonly, only to show the strength of their wings; or 'meddled with all knowledge,' only to prove their power—what else could be expected but the dislocation of some mental faculty, and the disease of the whole? It is a mercy to mankind, that the perversion of intellectual power disorders or impairs it. Wild and wanton theories are but too abundant as it is; and, could such men theorize to any extent, without unhinging their own minds and blasting their own happiness, the public mind would soon be unsettled and poisoned. But the 'lusts of the mind,' like 'the lusts of the flesh,' cannot be indulged with impunity. They sap or shatter the mental constitution as effectually and certainly as sensuality undermines the body; and, therefore, their effects should be as freely exposed, that they may operate as warnings.

It is, however, *inaction*, rather than extravagance, that these hints are intended to bear upon. Perverted genius is almost irreclaimable, because, in general, it is irreligious. An irreligious man, however great, cannot serve any good cause effectually. Byron could not have regenerated Greece, nor hastened her liberty, however long he had been spared to the cause he espoused, but by abandoning many of his own principles. In like manner, all our ungodly great men find it necessary to appear to have some religion, whenever they attempt to be philanthropic.

There are some kinds of publicity which highly susceptible minds ought to shrink from. But the ways in which great public objects may be promoted are as various as the objects themselves. They may be as effectually served in the parlour and in the study as in the pulpit or on the platform. He who dare not speak, may write with safety. He who cannot move assemblies without agitating himself, may inspire a succession of small circles.

Say not to yourself, 'What has all this to do with me?' You have mind enough to make you miserable if you live for yourself; because you live at a time when it is impossible to live ignorant of the wants and woes of a perishing world, or to pass unpunished for selfishness. The curse, even the bitter curse of Meroz, will find you out if you come not to the 'help of the Lord against the mighty.'

Say not either to yourself, 'I cannot glorify God: nothing I am capable of doing could amount to such service.' Let us examine this objection. Now, whilst it is certainly and emphatically condescension on the part of God to regard Himself as *glorified* by the works or the worship of the angelic hierarchy, still it is obvious that, if anything can glorify Him, their pure worship and perfect obedience must do so, because nothing finite can rise higher or be holier than the work and worship of angels. It is, therefore, not very difficult to conceive how God felt Himself to be really glorified, when these 'morning stars' sang together over creation, and when they shouted

Alleluia over the mysterious scenes of Providence, and when they sang a 'new song' on the completion of the majestic scheme of redemption. For what more or better could they have done? They concentrated all their powers of observation upon these wonderful works of God, and celebrated them with all their powers of feeling and utterance. Accordingly, God condescended to accept of this adoring homage, just as they intended it,—as the highest tribute of glory they could present.

Even we ourselves feel that if we could burn with seraphic ardour, or bow with angelic humility, or serve with cherubic alacrity, our worship would amount to something, somewhat like—glorifying God. It would, indeed, even then be *less* than God deserves, but still it would be immensely better than it is now, and more like a tribute of glory. As it is now, we find some difficulty in calling even our good works *obedience*, or our best worship *devotion*. Even when we give most liberally to the cause of God, and suffer most patiently under the mighty hand of God, we hardly venture to say or think that we have glorified God. And were any one—however much a stranger to all flattery and compliment—to say to us, after the most signal act of obedience or submission, 'Well, you have glorified God in this matter,' we should feel afraid to say 'Yes,' and even hesitate to say '*I hope so.*'

Is this low estimate of what we do and give in the service of God entirely from *humility?* Could no

other cause be assigned for our modesty, than our conviction that, after having 'done all, we are but unprofitable servants?' Does not our shame arise oftenest from the consciousness of not having done *all* that we might have done for God?

However this may be, one thing is certain, that both in doing and giving, in the service of God, we ought to aim expressly at *glorifying* God. He condescends to regard the service of men, as well as of angels, as a tribute of glory to Himself, and therefore it is neither humility nor good sense to shrink from viewing duty as God represents it.

Why did not Paul say to the redeemed Corinthians, '*Serve* God with your body and spirit, seeing ye are bought with a price'? Serving or obeying God, includes all the acts and efforts which glorifying God includes; but still Paul says, '*Glorify God.*' Why? Obviously because what is done with a view to honour or glorify God will be *better* done, even if there be no greater amount of obedience in the action itself. In general *more* will be done from this motive, because we are always more generous when we design to pay *honour*, than when we proceed to discharge debts. We apply the rule of bare justice to debts, but when we wish to honour a man, we do our utmost.

So it is in the service of God. Until we are concerned both to please and glorify Him, we shall calculate how *little* will pass for service; but the moment we propose to ourselves to give God a mark

of our love, or a pledge of our zeal, we shall try to do our best.

Let us inquire into the *extent* of the obligation to glorify God. Is it universally binding on all men, or is it binding only upon the redeemed? Now, so far as the oracle just quoted is concerned, the duty is enforced only upon those who are '*bought with a price*,' or redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. All such are emphatically 'not their own,' but each of them under infinite obligations to glorify God.

Are you, then, 'your own,' and under no such obligation, if you be not sure that you are redeemed by the blood of Christ? Are you at liberty to employ your body and spirit, your time and talents, just as you like, so long as you do not, or cannot, regard yourselves as 'the redeemed of the Lord?' Does moral obligation not *begin*, until personal redemption is ascertained to our own satisfaction and sensibly enjoyed?

If not, it is evident that there would be very few to enforce the obligation to glorify God upon. Yes, very *few*; for many of the avowed followers of Christ are afraid to say, '*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*' Were, therefore, the duty to be confined to those who possess the *assurance* of faith, and were all free to live as they choose who doubt their own redemption, how little could be done for the promotion of the divine glory, either at home or abroad?

What ought I to say on this subject? You see at a glance that it might be rendered deeply and terribly

controversial. It will not, however, be rendered so by me. I will confine myself to simple first principles, and keep you close to them, so long at least as you continue to read.

Now, it is our interest to live to the glory of God, even if we know nothing else about our personal redemption but just that we *need* to be redeemed.

Men who need the redemption of their souls from sin and hell, can only double their guilt and danger by neglecting to glorify God. Indeed, we could not do better, nor yet so well, as try to glorify Him, even if we did not need deliverance from the wrath to come.

Were we, therefore, absolutely '*our own*,' and thus irresponsible masters of our time and talents, of our powers and property, it would be our interest to consecrate ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, unto God. For, mark! we must give ourselves up to *something*. Neither the soul nor the body can be kept out of all employment, or kept clear of all purposes. They will do something, and do it for the sake of some object. Money will go for something; time will be well filled up in some way; influence will forward some purpose; they cannot terminate entirely nor chiefly in themselves. We must have an *object* to live for, whatever it be.

Now there is no object to be compared with the glory of God. What is done and given to promote that can neither be lost nor repented. It will *tell* on both the temporal and eternal benefit of mankind.

It is as sure to do good as that God cannot lie. Accordingly, all that has been done for the glory of God in any age, has done positive and permanent good to the world. In fact, more than one-half of all our national privileges and social advantages springs instrumentally from what former generations did for the glory of God. Our remote ancestors did not, indeed, act on very pure principles, nor from the best of motives, when they filled the land with sanctuaries, and enriched it by seats of learning. There was much ostentation in their zeal, and more legality in their charities. They rather aimed at propitiating and bribing God, than at glorifying Him; but still, what they spent in this way, God overruled for His own glory, and thus for good to the country.

The matter comes, therefore, to this,—What could we give ourselves to, that would be so good for ourselves or others as the promotion of the divine glory? Are they gainers in health or happiness who do nothing for God? They act, indeed, as if they were their *own;* but they are the servants, if not the slaves, of something which often sickens them in this world, and never brightens the aspect of the next world. Even men of genius and talent (as we have seen) are invariably the victims of their own mighty powers, whenever they live for their own fame, or for an object unworthy of eternity. Let us, however, look at ourselves. Now we are not our own, whatever may be our relation to the redemption which is by Christ Jesus.

Were we even excluded from it, or past redemption, we could not be absolutely our own. No man can be really independent of God. No man has any such possession of life, health, reason, or property, as to be sole *master* of them. He may refuse to glorify God with them, but he cannot resist God, if God lay His hand upon them.

One man may look at the mystery of redemption, and excuse himself; and another at its holiness, and dislike it; and another at its claims, and grudge them; but all three are equally at the *disposal* of God. They cannot take themselves out of His hands. It is, therefore, the very height of folly, as well as of effrontery, to evade the claims of God upon our time, property, or powers; for we have no time, but just what He allows; no property, but just what He spares; no powers, but just what He sustains; and, therefore, we can only *peril* them all by devoting none of them to His glory. We are masters of nothing, but of what He makes us masters, and of that no longer or further than He thinks proper; and surely it is not the way to *prolong* possession, to employ it contrary to the designs and demands of God.

Whatever, therefore, be our real or imaginary position towards redemption now, this is our actual position towards all we are or have,—entire and total dependence on the will of God. It is not, therefore, redemption that *makes* a man not his own. That increases and confirms his obligations to glorify God, but it does not create nor originate them. He could

not be his own, even if there were no Redeemer; and as there is a Redeemer able and willing to save unto the very uttermost, we ought willingly to consecrate ourselves to the divine glory, for it certainly will not, and cannot, hinder the redemption of any man to do whatever he can to glorify God.

Consider now the peculiar force of the motive which personal redemption furnishes on behalf of living to the divine glory. 'Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price.' Paul does not say a great price, nor an infinite price. He knew its greatness too well to attempt a description of it by words. In this he imitated the Saviour, when He spoke of the love of God in providing a Redeemer. He did not say how much, nor how warmly, God loved the world; but with a simplicity, which proves that description was baffled, He said, 'God *so loved* the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.' In like manner the precious blood of Christ is a ransom-price for the soul, which cannot be reckoned. Like His love, 'it passeth knowledge.'

Now, it was to this view of the redeeming price that the apostles and the primitive Christians *adjusted* the scale of their doing, giving, and suffering, for the glory of God and the Lamb. At Pentecost no man but Ananias said '*that aught he had was his own.*' They even took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and the loss of their lives. There was the force of the motive! The world never saw such a movement. It was, however, in fine harmony with all that had

happened on the great day of atonement, when the price of redemption was paid. Then the sun felt that its light was not its own, and shone not. The earth felt that its strength was not its own, and trembled. The dead felt that their graves were not their own, and came forth. Angels felt that their harps were not their own, and were silent. No wonder! The Lord of life and glory was not His *own* on that awful day. He was then 'the propitiation for *our* sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' He neither lived for Himself nor died for Himself, whilst He was in our world, and both in living and dying He left us an example that we should walk in His steps.

That example is as *inspiring* as it is perfect. Why, then, should the inspiration be lost on your heart, or its constraining influence uninfluential on your habits? You can co-operate in promoting the divine glory. Had you no other talent but the power of teaching children to read in the Sunday school, and no other time but the intervals of public worship, you may be a great blessing in your neighbourhood. And whatever be your talents, this would not be unworthy of a part of your time. That young man's mental vision is either weak or jaundiced, who sees no *glory* about Sunday schools. True, they are not 'the sun that rules by day, nor the moon that rules by night,' in the moral world, but they are the stars of its firmament, created and sustained by the same hand that planted the sanctuary and pointed to the closet.

They are, too, stars that will fight 'in their courses' against the *Siseras* of tyranny, and superstition, and infidelity. He who 'bringeth out the hosts of heaven in their seasons,' brought out these schools in the season when the history of the world was about to begin anew, and when the institutions of the world began to be remodelled. Rational liberty wanted them. The age of Bibles wanted them. Missionary enterprise wanted them. They have 'greatly helped' on all that is good or promising at home and abroad. Not that they taught children the elements of wise policy or of public spirit, but the men who taught children, and saw children learn, to read the Bible, saw also what a nation reading the Bible should be and would be. Philanthropists learnt *more* than they intended to teach. Even mere politicians, although they knew not how it was created, found a public opinion abroad in the country, upon which every moral question could fall back without losing ground, and rest until it was irresistible. For why can no great moral question be lost now from the moment it is mooted? Obviously, because its merits can be appreciated at once by all the friends of education. And they see them not only in the abstract, but also in their practical bearings upon a Bible-taught community. Thus, whilst there are no politics in Sunday schools, they help mightily to place and keep all national objects in their true light.

But the grand bearings of these seminaries are upon eternity. This is not seen, however, when attention

is confined to the instances of *early* piety which individual schools present to the eye. These are not few, but they are nothing to the general preparation which is made for eventual piety. There is something for the gospel to work upon, to appeal unto, in all who learn to read the word of God. They can never forget all their lessons, nor lose all their early impressions. Both prosperity and adversity will recall the memory of their teachers, their class, and their convictions of duty; and thus Providence, as well as Grace, will find much to turn into account. And they will turn it to *good* account. This sowing 'to the Spirit' is itself a pledge that Providence will watch, and the Spirit water, the seed of eternal life. God would never have put it into the hearts of so many to sow the precious seed in the hearts of the young, had He not intended to produce an eventual harvest of ripe fruits, which should bless the earth, and even beautify the heaven of heavens. Consecrated teachers will therefore see, long before the day of judgment declare it, that they have not laboured in vain. They will often hear the harps of angels struck to celebrate the repentance of some of their scholars. Their mansions of glory will be frequently gladdened by the entrance of some spirit, to whose childhood they ministered on earth, and in whose maturity and fellowship they shall rejoice for ever. Be a teacher if you can do nothing else. There will be a 'Sunday-school *jubilee*' in heaven as surely as there will be a ministerial jubilee.

But you can do more than teach children: you can learn 'to speak a word in season' to the sick and dying. Amongst them, too, a harvest may be reaped, which shall sweeten your own life, and swell the songs of eternity. Work, therefore, for God, if you would not weep in time. Work, if you would not weep through eternity!

CHAPTER X.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF THE EVIL OF SIN.

IT is just as true that *trifles* are not sins, as that *sins* are not trifles. Whilst, therefore, he is emphatically a fool who 'mocks at sin,' he is certainly not a wise man who reckons everything sinful which some good people call so. There are *singular* consciences amongst the pious, as well as 'seared consciences' amongst the profane. Better, indeed, 'strain' equally at a gnat and a camel, than 'swallow' both at once, or either with equal ease. Singularity is infinitely better, as well as safer, than insensibility; but as both are extremes, they ought to be carefully avoided,—the former, that our 'good may not be evil spoken of,' and the latter, that we may not make 'shipwreck of a good conscience.'

It has long been proverbial, and long may it continue so, that singularity is the safest side to err on; but still, an *error* in judgment, even if in favour of piety, is not a desirable auxiliary to piety. It furnishes those who dislike religion with a pretence against religion.

You have heard of the '*pious frauds*' of Popery. This name is given to the *first* series of false miracles and visions which were got up in favour of religion, before the Romish Church *traded* in 'lying wonders' and popular delusion. And although, of course, no fraud can be pious, it is not improbable that some good men really meant well when they connived at the pretence of holy relics, and heavenly visions, and miraculous images. At least they did not intend to furnish infidelity with weapons against revelation, nor anticipate that the scorners of future ages would confound Christianity itself with the superstitions of that age. Good intentions did not, however, prevent bad consequences. The school of Voltaire and Volney unmasked these frauds, and impudently charged them upon Christianity, although *it* had both predicted and denounced them as 'lying wonders.' In like manner there is no small danger of thinking too lightly of *sin* itself, when trifles are held up as sinful, or singularities paraded as virtuous. Sin is the transgression of the laws of God, and the penalty of sin is the wrath of God,—things infinitely too solemn to be enforced against trifles, or matters of doubtful disputation. We ought, therefore, to be very careful to confine the epithet *sinful* to the actions and dispositions which God calls sinful, and never to confound real infirmities or mere accidents with sins. For when everything that is not strictly religious is reckoned sinful, what is really sinful will not be reckoned very criminal or dangerous.

It is not by confessing that 'in all things we sin,' that we shall acquire the deepest hatred or fear of sin. Such a confession looks humble, and may be well meant, but it is anything but holy in its influence, except on those who are far advanced in holiness. Upon the generality it has just this effect, they regard sinning as so much a matter of course, that they are *afraid* of nothing but flagrant crimes. Accordingly, if they keep clear of them, they make no great effort to be very circumspect; for, having laid their account with sinning in all things, they excel in nothing. Because they can do nothing perfectly, they do not try how *well* anything can be done. Because 'we deceive ourselves' if we say we have '*no sin*,' they do not exert themselves to avoid sin, nor to discover how little it may be reduced to. Because they confess it in all things, they imagine that they cannot forsake it entirely in anything. '*This is a sore evil under the sun.*'

Should these hints commend themselves to your common sense, you must not be surprised if some people both question their truth and express alarm at their tendency. Eminently good people will, indeed, be glad to see you discriminate between weakness and wickedness, infirmity and sin; but those who have not conscience enough to try how *well* they can act, will, in order to hush up their suspicions of themselves, suspect you of some doctrinal heresy. Let no clamour tempt you, however, to confound trifles with sins. If you come to do that, you will soon confound sins with trifles, and take both easily.

Better try how much *truth* you can speak, than have to confess lies, however humbly. Better try how *temperate* you can be every day, than have to weep over excess, however penitently. Better try how much you can *govern* your tongue and temper, than have to stand self-condemned for the neglect of self-control. Those who deem it enough to ask *pardon* for such sins, without guarding against the recurrence of them, may insinuate that you are too proud to feel your need of daily pardon, and too ignorant of the spirituality of the divine law to be aware of your sinfulness. All this is easily said; and you ought to retort it solemnly, whenever it is said by those who *blunder* through life without much rule or conscience. You have, indeed, much to learn, both in regard to the extent of the divine requirements, and your need of daily pardon; but you will not learn either well, by leaving truth, temperance, or self-control to accident and circumstances. In fact, nothing could blind you more to the spirituality of the eternal law, than falling into the habit of regarding it as a matter of course, that sinning in all things is inevitable. *Imperfection* in all things is inevitable; but there is a mighty difference between coming short of the standard, after an honest effort to do well, and the sin of making no effort, or the sloth of letting duty take its chance. Try, therefore, to do your very *best* in something good, if you would ascertain either your own weakness, or your absolute need of mercy and grace.

On the other hand, great care must be taken, lest the real distinctions between sin and imperfection, fault and foible, be perverted. 'A straw will show which way the wind blows;' and things, in themselves but trifling, reveal the real state of the heart. It is, therefore, no answer to a charge of ungodliness, when it happens to be made in connection with the animated pursuit of some amusement, to ask, 'What harm is there in that amusement?' This is an unmanly subterfuge, if the pursuit engross all your spare time, and absorb all your thoughts. Then it is no trifle! for it has banished God from the mind, outweighed eternity, and infatuated the soul.

It is very easy to get up special pleadings on behalf of a favourite object, and to prove that there is nothing in its nature or tendency which is morally wrong; but the real question is, what place does it occupy in your heart, and what portion of your time does it consume? Music is not sinful, nor painting a waste of time, nor science unworthy of a Christian; but if they usurp the throne of the heart, what more could the worst vice do? It is the heart that God claims; and if it be withheld from Him, a literary excuse will avail as little as a sensual or secular apology. How could it be otherwise? It is, indeed, right to improve the mind by literature, and not wrong to blend some amusement with study; but it is an utter perversion of terms—an outrage on common sense and decency—to call that an *improvement* of the mind which banishes God from the mind—to

call that an *amusement* which renders divine and eternal things unpleasant to the heart!

How language can be abused! 'I am only improving my mind,' said a young man who was leaving neither time nor thought for religion. Science and literature were his all and all. He confessed that he never prayed, seldom opened the Bible, and never enjoyed the sanctuary; and yet, he pretended that he was *improving* his mind! I need not, surely, expose either the fallacy or the effrontery of this pretence. He might just as well have talked of the morning star improving its brilliancy by receding from the sun. He certainly forgot that the eternal improvement of the mind will arise from eternal contemplation of divine things. How, then, can that be a step towards it, which is a departure from them? But I forbear. Harmless and even proper objects may be pursued in a spirit, and to a degree, which render them as fatal to the soul as flagrant crimes can be.

Is it not, then, of immense, yea, of infinite importance, to form solid and solemn views of the evil of sin? It should be as impossible for us to think lightly of any sin, as of the shrieks of bodily agony, or the yells of mental disease. It should be held as infamous and unnatural to smile at sin as to mock at suffering; for '*sin is the transgression of the law.*'

If this consideration do not make you tremble at sin, you must have very vague notions of the eternal law. Did you ever look at the exact amount of your knowledge of divine law? Did you ever question

yourself on the subject? True, the law is the rule of life to us; but it is as much so as if an angel had walked at our side, pointing out the path of duty, and waving a flaming sword against every sin. It is more. It is such a rule of life as if we heard the actual voice of Jehovah behind us saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it, and turn neither to the right hand nor the left.' Yea, were the King Eternal visible, we could not be more obligated to dread sin than we now are, however much more awed we might be. We are, indeed, very much the creatures of circumstances; and, accordingly, were Sinai to thunder again from time to time, or its lightnings again to lighten the world, the law would command attention. But what are thunders, however loud, or lightnings, however vivid, compared with *the calm majesty of Jehovah's solemn silence?* In that deep calm, we hear the beatings of His heart against *sin*, and yet all in sympathy towards sinners. God is too much in earnest to *thunder* law, now that man can read it, and now that nations do not require forty years' discipline in a wilderness before they can discern between good and evil. Having finished redemption from the curse of the law, by the atonement of His Son, God has finished too the process of enforcing obedience by miracles, and thrown man, in the manhood of the world, upon the mighty energies and resources of the new covenant, that thus conscience might be the *Sinai* of the law, and memory and judgment its *tables*, and the heart its *ark*.

Thus God treats us as men, that we may be manly in our veneration of divine law. It is to the moral universe, what the laws of nature are to the material universe, the source and the secret of strength and order. Who would tamper with the law of *gravitation* in the solar system, or try to stop the smallest wheel in the machinery of that system, even if he could disturb them? The bare idea of falling stars, and loosened comets, would paralyze the boldest hand, or an indignant world would arrest and chain it. He is, however, a greater enemy of his species, and of his own soul, who would destroy or disturb the authority of *moral* law, as a whole or in any of its parts.

It will also help you to form solid and solemn views of the evil of sin, if you will calculate the tendency of any sin to prolong and spread itself. It does not stop when the *sinner* stops, nor die at his death. Dr. Gordon has well said: 'The guilty ambition of Jeroboam put into operation a principle of evil which gathered strength and malignant energy by the lapse of ages, and gave rise to a complication of crime, and a continued accumulation of suffering, which Omniscience alone can fully estimate or understand.' This awful case, although singular in degree, is not so in kind. Even in degree, Voltaire was the *Jeroboam* of France. The leaven of infidelity, which he infused into the lump of continental society, has not, indeed, 'leavened the whole lump;' but how widely it has wrought, how deeply it has penetrated, how direfully

it has operated! And when is it likely to work itself out or to be eradicated?[1]

It is not, indeed, so easy to trace the *trail* of a seducer, a gambler, a forger, or a drunkard, throughout all the circle and cycle of his influence; but each of them also transmits to posterity the *venom* of his own besetting sin. Their immediate victims are not their only, perhaps not their chief, victims. The immediate victim of the seducer is a daughter of parents whose hearts are well-nigh broken by her fall; the sister of brothers or sisters whose place and prospects in life are lowered by her fall; the mother of a child who inherits shame, and has no fair chance of acquiring character. Thus the evil begins to ramify! And all this is but the beginning of sorrows and sin. Her brothers and sisters, thrown into a lower sphere of life, with less self-respect and fewer friends, continue to sink in the scale of society; and then their offspring, like her own, rise up to spread and perpetuate misery and crime. The seducer originates this incalculable and interminable line of evil! Employ it, therefore, to fathom his *depth* in guilt and in the bottomless pit.

The fraud and forgery of extravagance work in the same way. The guilt of the gay Lothario is not

[1] A remarkable confirmation of this opinion appeared in the French correspondent's letter in the *Daily Telegraph*, March 8, 1872: 'It is a mistake to fancy that Voltaire is dead. You cannot go into the society of cultivated Frenchmen without meeting him. He is as much alive in the world of thought and letters, as Bossuet or De Maistre in the church.'

measured, nor its results calculated, when the money he has squandered is summed up, nor when the feelings of his family are reckoned. More than the *hopes* of his parents are blasted. Their *place* in society is altered, however much they retain the sympathy of society. They cannot place another of their sons, however steady, in the confidential situation which their prodigal abused. Even their daughters, however deserving, are thrown from the *vantage* ground of commanding influence. Not, indeed, that either the sisters or brothers of the prodigal are at all identified with him in principle or character, nor at all suspected; but still they have not all their wonted influence. They cannot do nor attempt all they once could. Even when others can forget or overlook the cloud which has fallen on their house, the family themselves cannot. They are unable to breathe under it with their usual freedom, or to walk beneath it with all the natural independence of their original bearing. They do not exactly stoop, nor succumb, nor shrink, nor falter, but yet they are not altogether their former selves. Thus the fraudulent spendthrift breaks the heart of his parents, and cripples the energies of the whole family. And what is he himself, wherever he may go? True, he may retrieve his character abroad. There are solitary instances of successful reformation amongst both voluntary and transported exiles. But whatever else they gain or regain, they never recover *self-respect*. When that morning star of the breast has set amidst the tears and shame of home,

it never rises again in another hemisphere, however character may rally or property accumulate. Even *piety* cannot restore self-respect. It is not intended to do so. It is one of its glories that it deepens self-condemnation, in the very proportion that it relieves the heart from the fear of final condemnation. Wherever, therefore, such an exile is,—whether amidst the sunny plains of Australia, or the solemn forests of America,—every attempt he makes to render the wilderness a fruitful field, and especially its success, 'when the wilderness blossoms like the rose,' forces back his thoughts to his fatherland, and entangles them with all the painful associations of home. For he cannot help assimilating his foreign house, and garden, and fields, to the home model; and thus, as they advance to perfection, they throw him back at every step upon the scenes of his youth. He cannot forget, whatever be his character; and if he is indeed 'a new man,' he never can forgive himself, however vivid or strong his hopes of divine forgiveness may be. Self-condemnation will be a perpetual and ponderous balance-wheel upon all his hopes and joys.

He may marry well and be justly beloved, both as a husband and a father, but he has a *secret* which he dare not confide to the wife of his bosom, and he must tell his children a *garbled* tale, when they ask him about his country or parents; and he may acquire and deserve the esteem of his neighbours, but even that, when it is most gratifying, will awaken 'the gnawing worm' of his deep consciousness that if they *knew all*

they would not respect him. He may even take a commanding place in civil and religious society, and become as useful as he is reformed; but no public confidence or private deference he may receive can ever restore the early sunshine of his conscience. It is impossible in the very nature of things. The *mill-stone* he hung around his own neck at home, he must carry with him wherever he goes; and even if no one see it or suspect it, it will often sink his spirits in a sea of agony or abstraction, which he cannot entirely conceal from others.

It is necessary to speak out on this painful subject. I would not take from any parent or his prodigal anything that the proverb, '*many a broken ship has come to land*,' really teaches. Such a broken ship, however, can no more sail on trading voyages in her old seas; and in new seas she must sail *water-logged*, however well she may be repaired or piloted.

CHAPTER XI.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF THE ATONEMENT.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing we understand better, in the conduct of others, than what is becoming or unbecoming in their spirit and deportment. We are almost eagle-eyed to discover, and eagle-winged to catch, whatever is worthy or unworthy of a man's rank and character. And in general, we are not far wrong in these prompt and summary decisions on what is becoming and consistent.

This almost instinctive sense of propriety in human conduct might, if wisely employed, enable us to judge wisely of what is becoming in the Divine conduct. For if we expect wise, good, and great men to act up to their character and avowed principles, we may well expect that the infinitely wise, great, and good God will do nothing unbecoming His character and supremacy. When, therefore, He says that it 'became' Him to save sinners only by the blood of the Lamb, it surely becomes us to search in His character and salvation, not for reasons why redemption could

not or should not be by atonement, but for reasons why it is so. Now, upon the very surface of the case, it is self-evident that an infinitely wise God would neither do too much nor too little for the salvation of man. Less than enough would not become His love, more than enough would not become His wisdom.

It is, however, said by some, and suspected by more, that an atonement for sin is unnecessary, and, therefore, untrue; that it would be unjust to lay the punishment of the guilty on the head of the innocent, and, therefore, that Christ did not suffer nor die for others.

This reasoning is as ruinous to its own object, as it is fallacious in itself. For Christ did suffer and die in agony and in ignominy; and if not for others, then for what? Either Christ's innocence or God's justice must be impeached and given up, if the death of the Cross was not a sacrifice for sin. Those, therefore, who allow that Christ Himself was sinless, and that He suffered, cannot prove that God is just; for to inflict or allow the infliction of suffering and death on a being perfectly innocent is flagrant injustice.

The other objections against the atonement may all be as triumphantly answered, and that by a process of reasoning neither abstract nor abstruse. They have only to be brought fully under the light of eternal glory, as that is revealed in the Bible, in order to be annihilated; for false or superficial views of heaven lie at the foundation of them all.

Bringing many sons to glory is God's chief and

final object, in all the mercy and grace which He exercises towards man.

Now glory, as a place, is the heaven where God Himself dwells and reigns, visibly and eternally. It is His own special temple, resplendent with His presence, and vocal with His worship. It is His own central throne, from which He surveys and rules the universe.

Again, glory, as a state of character, is likeness to the God of heaven; it is to bear the image of His spotless holiness, and to breathe the spirit of His perfect love. This is the glory to which God proposes to bring many sons. Now this heaven is so unlike our earth,—where God is altogether invisible, and man so unholy and unloving,—that, to say the least, a very great change for the better must take place in men, before they can be fit for such glory. There are some things in this heaven which are not very agreeable to the natural mind of man, such as universal and everlasting spirituality and harmony. And then there are in it none of the things which man likes most, such as sensual gratifications and secular honours. Such being the sober facts of the case (and they are solemn and obvious facts), it surely 'becomes' God to take care that this heaven, which is to be His own eternal temple and throne, shall not be disgraced nor disturbed by the presence of unholy or alienated inhabitants. Were it only for the sake of the innumerable company of angels which are in it, it becomes Him 'for' whom all angels are obedient and harmoni-

ous, and 'by' whom they are all perfectly happy, to take care that neither their bliss nor their holiness should ever be spoiled by improper company. For it would be very unbecoming to mix up with such a hierarchy of pure and united spirits, any number of passionate or impure beings. And as 'many sons' are to be brought from our earth to this heaven, there is the more need to guard against the introduction of unsanctified sons. Well, all this danger is effectually provided against. Nothing that defileth or divideth shall ever enter the gates of glory. All who shall inherit heaven, will be made 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' Corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortality put on immortality, to put them off no more for ever. Sin will be as impossible for ever as suffering; and disagreement as unknown as death. All the exceeding weight of glory will be 'an eternal weight of glory.' So far this is an arrangement which, it will be allowed, is highly becoming the high character of God, and of heaven too. This will be a state of things in full harmony with all that we know or can imagine, of the personal glory and felicity of the Godhead. May we not therefore expect that, as the grand end of His mercy and grace is so worthy of all His perfections, all the means of bringing many sons to this glory, will be equally worthy and becoming? God is as unlikely to let down His character by the plan of salvation, as by the result of it. His way of saving is, therefore, as sure to be what becomes Himself, as heaven is so.

The sufferings of Christ are declared to be the way in which it became God to bring man to glory.

This, however, is denied by many, and doubted by more. Other ways are said to be far more becoming the character of God. An atonement is said to be unworthy of His goodness to ask, and of His justice to accept. Accordingly, it is held and upheld by not a few, that the most becoming way of saving sinners, is graciously to forgive and forget all their sins, without any satisfaction to law or justice but repentance. Let us examine this matter, said to be so becoming!

How does it become Him, who is the author and end of all things, to pardon all sin, and any sin, on the repentance and reformation of the sinner alone? It is allowed by the enemies of the atonement, that it becomes God to require repentance and amendment, in order to pardon. Well, this must of course be because God hates sin, and because sin is an evil which ought to be repented of and given up, and because an impenitent and unholy heart will not suit heaven. But unless it can be proved that pardon thus obtained by repentance, would prevent for ever all sin in heaven, it cannot 'become' God to pardon on such conditions, if He intend to maintain eternal glory. For, were pardon thus cheap, where would be the check against the recurrence of sin in heaven? Who would fear much to renew sinful experiments on high, if the matter were thus easily settled below? Remember, it is essential to the eternity of heaven, that sin be eternally impossible to all the 'many sons'

brought to glory. But on this plan, sin would be for ever both possible and practicable, because so easily remedied. In fact, were this doctrine of repentance true, it would be an eternal temptation to sin.

But it is thought that being in heaven will be enough to prevent all sin for ever. 'For ever' is a word easily uttered, but it is a duration unutterable. However, whatever heaven may be, that it always was; and we know that being in it did not prevent some angels from becoming devils. This, therefore, is no eternal antidote against sinning and falling again. 'But if we were made, like heaven, perfectly pure and wise, would not that be an eternal security?' Now, I readily grant that it ought to be so. I must, however, remind you that, at their creation, the now fallen angels were as full and effulgent with holiness and wisdom as God could make them, and yet they rebelled and fell. A plain proof that no degree of 'the image of the heavenly' could prevent, by its own power alone, the return of any son in glory to 'the image of the earthy,' if he were brought to heaven by mere repentance, however that repentance issued in perfect holiness. The perfect holiness would be for ever in jeopardy, by the cheapness and easiness of a penitential pardon. 'But would not all tendency to fall wear itself out by degrees, until every one was so tired of trying rash experiments, that all would give them up for ever, and thus the evil cure itself?' I answer, evil has never cured itself in this way, but

waxed worse and worse. But even if it could eventually become its own antidote, how would it 'become' God to wait until all had worn themselves weary of trying rash and wrong experiments? 'But why not then confirm for ever the holy principles and inclinations of all as they enter heaven, and thus prevent the possibility of sin?' Confirm them! why, the plan of saving by mere mercy, on mere repentance, leaves nothing to confirm them with, but that kind of power which keeps the mountains steady, and the stars regular; and such physical power God does not apply to mind, but to dead matter. It would not become Him by whom all minds were made rational, and for whom all minds should be religious, to confirm them in holiness by force. Mind can only be made or kept virtuous by the power of virtuous motives. Unless, therefore, salvation by repentance alone, has power in itself to confirm perfection, it should be discarded at once as untenable and untrue. Now, we have seen that it has not absolute power to do so. The atonement of Emmanuel has alone the power of moral confirmation. The evil of sin, seen in His humiliation, seen in His sufferings, seen in His blood, will be an eternal antidote to all sin in heaven. None of all the many sons in glory will ever think of sinning, when they see Him in the midst of the throne as a Lamb that had been slain. The sight of Christ, and the idea of future sin, will never blend in any conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ. He will be High Priest for ever in heaven, and therefore His crucified

presence will be as effectual to prevent all future sin, as His death was to atone for past sin.

'But sinning in heaven,' it may be said, 'no one ever dreams of such a thing. What, then, is the use of spending so much time and strength on a point which people never think about? Would it not be wiser to expend this labour on the prevention of sin on earth?' Well, the only thing which can effectually prevent it on earth, is that which alone can eternally prevent it in heaven—the influence of the cross of Christ; and if that be needed there, to keep saints and angels in their place and character, surely it is wanted here, where inclination and temptation to sin are so strong!

I am not, therefore, beating the air, nor fighting shadows, in this argument; but climbing to the highest point in eternal glory, that I may throw myself down with irresistible force upon your consciences, by the fact that there is only one remedy for sin—only one effectual preventive of sin in the universe of God. Heaven cannot be kept heaven, without the Cross in the midst of the throne. How then can you be cured or kept from sin, without glorying in that Cross? The love of Christ has not that constraining influence amongst us which it ought, and might have. How else could so many, who profess to depend on Him for salvation, keep back from the sacrament of His death? Oh, consider, all who forget His dying command: how can it be safe to neglect this commemoration on earth, seeing it would be unsafe in heaven

for any patriarch, prophet, apostle, or martyr, to neglect the marriage supper of the Lamb? I tell you that there is not an angel in heaven would be safe to cease from joining in the new song, for they, too, are all kept in their proper place and spirit, by looking into the sufferings of Christ; and but for the confirming influence of His cross on them, they would all have no more security against falling, than Satan and his angels had in their first estate.

Some argue for another way of salvation, and more take for granted, that if they only repent and reform at last, there is no great danger of missing heaven. Now, were all this as true as it is false, still a heaven got in this way could not be kept, to a certainty. There would be, in spite of all its glories, eternal danger of losing it again, because there is not moral force in either repentance or perfection, to prevent sin. Human perfection failed in paradise; angelic perfection failed in the heaven of heavens. He must therefore deceive himself, who, in the face of such facts, could flatter himself that he could do better to all eternity. It cannot be; if we wish for an eternal heaven, we must seek it as the purchase of the Saviour's blood; for it is proved by fatal experience, that finite beings, however happy or pure, are for ever capable both of erring and falling when left to their own power. God has therefore determined to put a final stop to all defection in all unfallen worlds; and as it would not become the Father of spirits to confirm spirits by force, He so loved them as to con-

firm them by the death of His Son. He saw that His blood would secure and seal the eternal safety of all the fallen men who trusted in it, and of all the unfallen angels and worlds who adore it; and He withheld not, He grudged not, He hesitated not, to make Him the redeemer of man, and the ratifier of angels. It was the utmost that infinite love and power could do; and God did it as willingly as He created light.

It is declared that, in saving man by the sufferings of Christ, God had a regard to the relation in which all things in the universe stood to Himself. What He did in making Christ a sacrifice for our sins, was what 'became' Him to do, as the author and end of all things visible and invisible. Now, it certainly became God to save man, in a way that should not endanger the safety of angels. But this could not have been done by a penitential salvation. That would have been to tell all the unfallen universe, that tears would repair any injury they might ever do to the honour of God, or their own interests. A fine lesson, forsooth, in a universe where even innocence is no safeguard from temptation! They must have very low ideas of God indeed, who can imagine that it would become Him to pardon sin on mere repentance. Were this the fact as to the way of pardon, the probability would inevitably be, that God would have to go on pardoning to all eternity. In like manner, a legal salvation would have tended to relax the obedience of angels. For if man had got to

heaven by an imperfect obedience, why might not angels expect to keep heaven by an imperfect one? And if a return to duty be enough for man, why should it not be enough for angels? Thus salvation by works would just throw loose the whole universe to try whatever experiments they liked, because, on that principle, they would only have to return to their duty, in order to set all right again. It surely requires but little discernment to see and feel, that such a plan of pardoning would ill become Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.

It certainly became God to save man in a way which should not impeach His character for not saving fallen angels. They had been hurled at once from thrones of light, into chains of eternal darkness. And no unfallen spirit in the universe doubted, at the awful moment of this judgment, its perfect justice; but all, as they looked on the dark and deserted orbits of these lost morning stars, felt that God had done what 'became' His holiness and supremacy. But could they have felt thus if the next race of sinners had been pardoned on mere repentance? Two such different modes of treating sin, could not have been thought equally well of. If the first was not too severe, the second was too lenient, for both could not become the same God. Angels must, therefore, have hated the one, if they loved the other. For look at the facts of the case: a river of life flowing down to our world from the very throne of God, and a river of wrath flowing down to hell from the same

throne. This admits of only one explanation, viz. that the blood of Christ flowed for fallen man, and not for fallen angels. On no other principle can we account for, or harmonize with the character of God, the freeness of the salvation offered to us. Eternal happiness offered to one race of sinners, and eternal misery inflicted on another race of sinners, would be an eternal anomaly in the moral government of God, but for the atonement made by Christ on our behalf. But now, no holy nor wise being can wonder that grace reigns by the blood of the Lamb of God. They may and will eternally wonder that He shed His blood for us; but they cannot wonder that it made salvation sure or free. Nor can they wonder that Satan and his angels are not redeemed, seeing it was by opposing this scheme of redemption they sinned and fell. 'Satan,' says Christ, 'abode not in the Truth,' and therefore the Saviour took not on Him the nature of angels, but the nature of man.

It became God to redeem man, and confirm angels, in such a way as to leave no possibility of imagining that any higher happiness could be found out, than just what the voluntary gift of God conferred.

The rock on which finite beings would (but for the atonement) be always in danger of splitting, is the idea that more might be known than is told them, and more enjoyed than is given them. Man and angels split upon this rock. Neither words nor warnings seem enough to produce an eternal and universal persuasion, that there is nothing better beyond what

God allows. Indeed, the more a finite being has of rank or bliss, the more he is in danger of being tempted to suspect that he could get higher on the scale. They have never studied mental power who do not understand this fact, and hence all the mist and dust thrown around the origin of evil. Curiosity is its real origin. One grand object of redemption was, therefore, to throw open all that can be known or enjoyed. And this the atonement of Christ does fully and freely. It is sensible and decisive proof to the universe, that He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to save man, and seal angels, will with Him freely give 'all things.' Thus, His unspeakable gift being the very uttermost length that Infinity could go to, it must be eternally seen and felt that there is nothing beyond; for this throws open the whole character of God, and the whole range of possibility, and thus will put an end for ever to all doubts and experiments.

It became God to redeem man, and to confirm angels, in such a way as to render the impartiality of His love to both for ever unquestionable. Accordingly, it is as sons that He will bring men to glory, the very rank which all the unfallen spirits in all worlds hold. The redeemed, therefore, can never be jealous of angels, nor angels of them. Neither cherubim nor seraphim can be slow to welcome, nor ashamed to love, those whom Christ loved and washed from their sins in His own blood. This is a distinction which no angelic rank can ever eclipse or lessen.

Our nature, united to Godhead in the person of Christ, and perfected in ourselves, will at least equal all angelic nature in power and purity, and thus secure an equal place before the throne. In like manner, it will be for ever impossible for redeemed men to envy confirmed angels, because on both the image of God will be equally bright, the smile of God equally sweet, communion with God equally intimate, the mysteries of God equally open, the glories of God equally familiar, and all the range of heavenly enjoyment equally free. This will be a universe of harmony and happiness! Yes, and the cross of Christ will be the central pillar on which all its eternal weight of glory will hang. Under its shadow, the redeemed shall more clearly comprehend, as they contemplate its mysteries, how 'it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.'

CHAPTER XII.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF PREACHING.

THE preaching of the Gospel is 'the ministry of reconciliation,' and God so identifies both His character and authority with it, that it is 'as though God did beseech us to be reconciled' unto Himself. The apostles believed this, and preached the Gospel of the kingdom as the ambassadors of the King, urging reconciliation on the world and on the church, in the very spirit in which God and the Lamb would press it, were they to preach their own Gospel, or plead their own claims in person.

This was taking very high and holy ground, indeed, as ministers of the Gospel! We concede to them, however, the right of placing their preaching on such vantage ground. They were well qualified to sustain and justify their title, when they stood forward in the face of the world saying, '*We are ambassadors for Christ.*' They could demonstrate the legitimacy of both their office and their embassy, by miracles, whenever it was necessary to prove them by such signs or wonders; or they could rise to such heights of wisdom and eloquence, as accorded with both the

loveliest and the loftiest views of the God in whose name they spoke. Their reasonings were not unlike His manifold wisdom; nor their appeals unlike His paternal kindness; nor their remonstrances unlike His judicial authority. We see at once the 'demonstration of the Spirit' in the boldness of Peter, in the sublimity of Paul, and in the heavenliness of John. When we think of them as preachers, we feel quite sure that we should have recognised and revered them as the messengers of God. But when we try to transfer this feeling to uninspired preaching, how its fine spirit changes! Towards a few modern names, we can, indeed, easily transfer no small portion of that veneration and deference we feel for the apostles of the Lamb. Transcendent genius, learning, or eloquence, commands a homage somewhat akin to what we pay to inspiration; but towards men of like talents with ourselves, we are slow of heart to attach any importance beyond what their superior piety wins for them. Is this altogether creditable to us? It is, indeed, very natural; but is it wise? True, it would be unwise to identify ordinary ministers with inspired apostles. It would be impossible to do so, even if it were not improper. It is, however, highly improper. No man, however gifted or holy, has any right to such deference as we give to the first ambassadors of Christ; and to give it to every good man who preaches the Gospel, could only lower our respect for inspiration itself. Besides, no really gifted or good minister would thank us for identifying him with the apostles.

But, after all, it was the *truth* which the apostles preached, that was the main thing even in their ministry. Neither their gifts nor their graces added an iota to the goodness of the good tidings they proclaimed. Their miraculous powers gave no *saving* power to the Gospel. Miracles accredited its truth and demonstrated its importance, inasmuch as they were all too good to be the vouchers of a lie, and too great to be the seals of a trifle; but they added no glory to the glorious Gospel itself: they only illustrated and attested its inherent glory. They proved the greatness of the great salvation; but they did not, could not, make it any greater in grace or glory than it was before the world began. That salvation is, therefore, no less, now that miracles and apostles too are gone. It lost nothing of its grace or its glory when it lost their services. The covenant of grace was 'well ordered in all things, and sure,' before they ministered at its Ark, and it was nowise deranged or altered when they were withdrawn. The Gospel is still, and as much as ever, the ministry of reconciliation, now that ordinary men proclaim it, as when its ambassadors were like mighty angels flying in the midst of heaven to preach it.

We forget what reconciliation with God is, if we doubt or do not feel this. '*Be ye reconciled unto God*,' is a voice that should arrest and charm us at once, for no human tones can render this good news harsh, and no human nor angelic talents could render it more worthy of our acceptation. We forget our

alienation from God, or underrate the peril of it, if there be not celestial music to our ears and hearts in every and any whisper of reconciliation.

I am no apologist for harsh tones or inelegant terms, in preaching the Gospel; but I must say, that if either can turn us against the Gospel, or even lower it at all in our estimation, we do not love it as we ought, nor feel our need of it much. It cannot be lessened in the esteem of any man who believes it cordially, by the manner of any man who preaches feebly or coarsely. Well-regulated minds will, indeed, feel grieved, just in proportion as they are warm-hearted, when the glorious Gospel is tamely preached, and disgusted when it is disgraced by vulgarity or levity. These feelings will, however, terminate upon the man who excites them, and in nowise extend to the truth he utters. It will be revered by believers, however much he may be pitied or despised.

This is not, however, the general character of evangelical preaching. Its average, if plain, is not commonplace nor tame. Were it, however, both, it would still be the best source of wisdom and consolation that our world furnishes. I have no objection to join any one in deploring poverty of thought, feeling, or language, wherever it is found, and none to condemn that poverty, wherever it is the effect of idleness; but after all the deductions and objections which can be made, I must hoodwink both my judgment and conscience, before I can cease to see that the most ordinary preaching of the

Gospel is infinitely better than all that is extraordinary in the appeals of nature, or the discoveries of philosophy. Of evangelical preaching, as of Christ, it may be said, '*To whom else can we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life.*' The words of poetry may be found in nature, and the words of patriotism in philosophy, and the words of wealth in science, and the words of amusement in literature; but '*words whereby we can be saved*' as sinners, or soothed as sufferers, or cheered at death, are found habitually and systematically on no human lips but the preacher's. His lips keep the knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation.

I know and love the voice of nature, from its softest whispers up to its loudest thunders; from its tinkling rills up to its roaring cataracts. I have listened to her voice both in her Edens and her wildernesses; on her mountain thrones, and in her ocean caves; on the bosom of her seas, and in the depths of her forests; under both her sunlight and moonlight; and asked all manner of questions in these scenes, but all in vain, whenever the questions touched upon immortality or salvation. Then nature was as silent as the grave; her light was darkness, and her loveliness proved nothing until I opened my Bible.

Men may talk of finding

> 'Books in running brooks,
> Sermons in trees, and good in
> Everything;'

whilst the only good they seek or feel the need of

is temporal. Sermons from trees and flowers, rocks and stars, may answer their purpose whilst the soul cares for nothing but its own capacity of interpreting and enjoying the aspects of creation; but when the soul feels that its powers are responsibilities, and that its eternal prospects are clouded by guilt and depravity, no sermons but such as Peter preached at Pentecost can relieve its anxieties. Accordingly, men soon quit the temple of nature, when they begin to ask, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Only the house of God is a temple then; and then it is a temple, even if its minister be an itinerant. Let him only be a good man, and mighty in the Scriptures, and his weakness in any other ministerial qualification will not be thought of by a soul thirsting for salvation. As the feet of the messengers of peace were 'beautiful on the mountains,' although disfigured and torn in running from the camp to the city, to make the good news early news to the fearful, so the humblest preacher of the Gospel, if his heart be in his work, will be loved 'for the truth's sake that dwelleth in him,' by any man who feels the need of that truth. He will not, however intellectual or refined, refuse to be comforted until 'a master in Israel' preach to him. He will gladly take the cup of salvation from the first hand that offers it full; and although he may soon seek some stronger hand to fill it again, he will never forget or cease to bless the hand that filled it first. In like manner, if he be a lover of nature, his return to her temple, although

sure, will never be at the expense of the sanctuary of God. He will wander and muse again in his favourite walks, but not at the time of the Sabbath morning or evening sacrifice. He will still love solitude and scenery, but he will not prefer them to the ordinances or the fellowship of the church.

It is not, however, necessary, in order to maintain the importance of preaching, to rest the argument upon the case of those who are crying out or longing for the water of life. Men, who

'Must drink or die,'

will not, of course, be very fastidious in their taste. The claims of preaching can, however, be justified apart from all appeals to the timid or the trembling. Even that kind of preaching which never won applause by its eloquence, nor kindled public curiosity by its fame, has made Britain and America whatever they are as '*holy nations*,' and much of what they are as free and powerful nations. Most readily and cheerfully do I grant, yea, contend, that the great preachers of both nations gave the impulse which rendered preaching popular, and made ordinary preachers enterprising. They won or compelled much of the homage which the pulpit enjoys in both hemispheres. Without these high priests there would have been fewer Levites, and the Levites less successful. The tall cedars of Lebanon have sheltered its fir, olive, and myrtle trees, when the tempest has broken on the mountain of the Lord's house. In this point of view, great men have done great good

by their preaching. It has 'greatly helped' ordinary men to be useful. But still, it has not been by wonderful sermons, but by wise and warm-hearted sermons, that most good has been done. The great majority, both of the dead in Christ, and of the living in Jerusalem, were won to Christ not by the giants of genius or erudition, but by the watchfulness and fidelity of hard-working pastors. The claims of the pulpit do not, therefore, rest upon the memory of its brightest ornaments. They rest far more upon the memory of its countless converts. Its 'record is on high.' The general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, is its great cloud of witnesses. All in heaven who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, are the vouchers and the trophies of its instrumental triumphs. The pulpit—the *ordinary* pulpit—has always been the chief means of filling heaven. The eloquence of the senate has occasionally freed nations from despotism; and the eloquence of the bar from conspiracies against liberty; and the chairs of science and philosophy have often dissolved popular superstitions; and all these triumphs have wrought together for good to the souls as well as to the bodies of men: but the *conversion* of souls to God, and the training of souls to glory, have been the achievement of the pulpit. No other 'chair of verity' can point to the multitudes around the eternal throne, and say, 'Behold the children whom God hath given me.' The pulpit can say with truth of all the redeemed from amongst

men, 'All these souls are mine' instrumentally; whereas it is more than doubtful whether there be *one* soul in heaven to whom anything on earth was so useful as preaching. Neither literature nor legislation, science nor philosophy, can trace their triumphs in that world. They are all 'of the earth, earthy;' for whatever influence they have had upon any one in heaven, the Gospel made it heavenly.

In thus magnifying the pulpit, I do not forget the mighty influence of good books and godly parents upon the influx of souls to heaven. I claim, however, the best of both for the pulpit. All the most useful religious books emanated from it, and almost all godly parents were its children. It trained the fathers and the mothers who have trained up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Whatever we owe directly to pious parents, we owe indirectly to the pulpit. It has therefore no occasion to throw its defence or its claims upon the *sun-stars* which have shone in it from time to time: the ordinary stars of its holy galaxy have been the chief lights of the world in leading many sons to glory, and its brightest stars themselves were kindled by it.

But whilst the grand record of the pulpit is 'on high,' it has also a goodly record below. The history of preaching, like all other history, is indeed disfigured, and even stained by crime and folly. Nothing too severe could be said against the nonsense and noise, the quirks and cant, the servility and extravagance, which have often issued from the pulpit.

Still, on the other hand, nothing too kind or too grateful can be said of the moral and ameliorating influence which, notwithstanding all these faults, it has had upon the character and condition of this nation. In nations where preaching is a secondary thing in public worship, public worship has but little moral influence. It does not tell well upon law or order. It neither purifies social life, nor improves public opinion. Itself a form, it gives nothing but *form* to morals and demeanour; whereas, wherever the pulpit is as sacred as the altar, both tell powerfully upon public and private life.

We are more affected, and perhaps not improperly, by what the pulpit fails to accomplish, than by its beneficial influence on the community. The good it does makes no parade of itself; whereas the evil it cannot reach, or fails to cure, obtrudes itself upon our notice in rampant forms. Any one can tell what the pulpit has *not* done for the nation; but it is not every one can calculate what it has done, or comprehend the amount, even when it is summed up.

I frankly confess that I cannot. I have often tried, but always failed, never, however, without determining to try again. Failure always inflamed curiosity. I can easily, and at any time, see what God has done by the pulpit, whilst I number its living converts and its dead vouchers; whilst I look at the order, and listen to the domestic worship, of all the families in the land whom it has taught to fear God; whilst I pass from congregation to congregation, and church

to church, marking how many in each it unites in heart, and how many of the united it confederates in the glorious work of teaching the ignorant, visiting the afflicted, and spreading the Gospel. I can even see, with some clearness, how the preaching at home creates and keeps up all the agencies which are now shaking idolatry and superstition abroad. But, whilst I can thus trace the influence of the pulpit, as its 'line is going out through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world,' I cannot trace that line as it runs through all the frame of society, strengthening good laws, and pushing out bad for ever; giving integrity to trade, and honesty to policy; working out the freedom of slaves, and the equal rights of freemen; turning national patriotism into universal philanthropy; making the arts chaste, the sciences modest, and literature moral. Here I am lost! I know that the sanctifying and sustaining line blends itself with all that is good and great in national character and public spirit, and moderates all that is bad or base in both; but it is so widely extended, and ramifies itself so minutely, and works so calmly, that, like the principle of gravitation, it eludes the eye, although universally felt. As in the sea, although all the rivers run into it, they so soon blend themselves with its own waters, that the stream of the mightiest river cannot be traced far upon the bosom of the great deep, but still they all uphold its volume and maintain its salubrity; so, in society, the distinct influence of preaching is felt through all its frame,

but is undefinable as affects the whole frame. Perhaps, therefore, the best way of estimating its beneficial influences, is to ask ourselves what would be the consequence of extinguishing the pulpit? Suppose it extinct and forgotten, and thus all the families of the land thrown upon their own mental and moral resources, guideless, creedless, and without Sabbaths or sanctuaries, how long would British liberty be the day-star of the world, or British philanthropy be the hope of the heathen, or the home of the destitute? How long would property or life retain their present sacredness? Let France answer these questions. She tried to do without either the pulpit or the altar of God; but although science, policy, and heroism put forth all their energies in union to make her the queen amongst the nations, they made her only the beacon of the world, and the victim of her own impiety and caprice.

I am therefore not ashamed to 'magnify my office.' It is God's ordinance, and gloriously has He owned and honoured it in the world. What but preaching overthrew ancient heathenism all over the Roman empire? What but preaching broke the iron sceptre of modern Rome? What but preaching, by the agents and energies it has called forth at home, has added the islands of the Pacific to Christendom, and brought the idolatry of India to a crisis, which fills even its priesthood with despair?

Most fully and frankly do I concede, that the pulpit is neither what it ought to be nor what it might be;

but still I fearlessly maintain that, even as it is, nothing else does so much good, nor could anything be invented in its room that would do more or equal good. Any mode or system of preaching that was *less* elementary would be useless to the poor, and one *more* elementary would be unedifying to the intelligent and the educated. Whatever, therefore, a few fastidious minds may think or say, who take more interest in the poetry and philosophy of religion, than in the conversion of sinners or the consolation of saints, it can be proved, indeed it requires no proof, that *their ideal* pulpit would answer no practical purposes. They themselves are living proofs of this. Their refinements, whether sublimated thought or exalted feeling, terminate upon themselves, and never lead them out to teach the ignorant or soothe the wretched. The utmost that these sentimental critics of the pulpit do, is to sentimentalize a few of the young, who happen to have little sense, and less care. And they must have very little of both, to listen to *idle* men pitying or despising working ministers. It is well for the world that ministers have not such refinements as such critics plume themselves upon. If they had, they would soon be as *useless* as their critics.

Look always, therefore, at the *whole* state of the world before you fix a standard to judge preaching by. The pulpit ought, indeed, to keep pace with the march of intellect and the progress of knowledge. It should never be in the rear of the school, nor its

ministers behind schoolmasters. The march of intellect, however, does not outrun the march of suffering and sorrow; the progress of knowledge does not stop the progress of death or disease. The *hereditary* ills of life follow society like its shadow, however society advance. The pulpit must therefore adapt itself to the permanent mass of suffering, as well as to the accumulating mass of knowledge. There must be no such haste to overtake intellect, as would hurry a minister away from softening calamity. Breaking hearts and bleeding consciences must not be sacrificed nor forgotten, in order to keep up with expanding minds or exploring spirits. He is therefore as 'cruel as the grave,' although polished as a cenotaph, who prefers the gratification of his own literary taste to the comfort of the tried and tempted, the disconsolate and bereaved. The mental food he calls for would be mockery to the wants and woes of suffering humanity, and moral poison to the souls of the thoughtless. And yet there are men so selfish and mean as to writhe with impatience, or to manifest disgust, when preaching weeps with them that weep, or guides the perplexed. A well-regulated mind, however original or powerful, would rejoice to see preaching condescend to men of low estate, and especially to mourners in Zion. Nothing is more false than the notion that no good can be got from a sermon which is not personally interesting to us. If it be really suitable to any one, it may be useful to us, because the case it meets may some time be our

own case, or what is better, it may prevent us from involving ourselves in the dilemmas of such a case. Paul evinced as much philosophy as philanthropy when he said, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others also.' He did not mean by this that we should 'hear for others,' but that we should learn from what suits them, as well as from what is adapted to ourselves.

Besides, it is, although not in the popular sense of the word, truly '*fellowship*' with the Godhead, to take a lively interest in the spiritual welfare of all classes under the Gospel. The man who has been reconciled through the blood of the Cross, participates in the paternal feelings of the Father, and in the mediatorial solicitude of the Son, and in the gracious sympathies of the Holy Spirit, when he forgets his own personal joy, in the joy of hearing others beseeched to be reconciled unto God. The man who has but few cares and no perplexities, never has more fellow-feeling with the Eternal Mind than when he melts with pity, as the successive trials and temptations of penitents and pilgrims are exhibited and met. We come, also, into sublime fellowship with 'the innumerable company of angels, and with the general assembly' of saints in heaven, when we listen with delight to sermons calculated to lead sinners to repentance, and adapted to teach penitents to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. In all this our spirits would delight, were they in heaven looking down from the throne to the pulpit; and surely it is

not less becoming when looking up from the pulpit to the throne.

You are now prepared for the assertion, that the kind of preaching which some call for is not provided for in the word of God, nor agreeable to the will of God, nor suited to the real wants of the world: I mean the demand made by minds of a certain order, for flashes of imagination, and feats of reasoning. This class care for nothing but talent and taste in the pulpit. Now, if there were nothing but talent and taste *around* the pulpit, I would be amongst the first to maintain that more ought to be put forth in it. Reasonings might be more profound, and illustrations more splendid, without at all darkening doctrinal or sentimentalizing experimental truth; for whilst there is nothing so lowly as the Gospel, there is nothing so lofty. It demands simplicity, but it admits of sublimity. Is that really *sublime*, however, which a few literary men, and not a few youthful minds, regard as such? They recognise no sublimity in sermons which set the spirit to commune with itself; nor in sermons which lead the spirit into communion with the Father of spirits; nor in sermons which place all souls in the only position in which a sinner can find mercy. Are they, therefore, competent judges of the sublime or the beautiful in thought or feeling, who have thus no relish for the grand ends of either? What real glory can there be in any line or form of thought, which does not lead the spirit in upon itself in scrutiny, and out to God in supplica-

tion? That only is grand in idea or diction which brings God and man into willing communion with each other. The only truly sublime ideas are those which will be *eternal* ideas, when the mind is all light and the spirit perfect.

Consider this: evangelical preaching brings before your minds from Sabbath to Sabbath all the grand truths which you will admire and love to all eternity in heaven. If, therefore, you think and act with any express reference to the eternal themes of heaven, and the immortal emotions of your spirit, you cannot but rejoice that the pulpit gives prominence to the truths which the throne will prolong for ever. The notes which preaching gives of the new song may be weak and unequal, but they are all *key-notes* of the everlasting anthem of redemption; and this, you know, cannot be said with any semblance of truth of the kind or forms of sentiment which mere literary taste or mingled taste and fancy regard as most sublime. That is most sublime, which sublimates taste to relish what is the chief joy of immortals, and what Deity for ever approves.

I may now surely call upon you to admire both the wisdom and kindness of God in committing the ministry of reconciliation to the trust of ordinary men. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man;' and in earthen vessels of various dimensions and polish, because the treasure is intended to enrich minds of all orders, and men of all conditions.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF DEVOTION.

WHATEVER propriety there may be in bowing our knees and lifting our hands before God when we worship Him, it would certainly be impossible to *love* or *fear* God if either postures or sounds amounted to acceptable worship. It might, indeed, from our natural aversion to thoughtful and spiritual devotion, please our slothfulness, and suit what we call our convenience, if a humble position of the body, or a solemn vocal sound, would pass for worship; but if they did, we could not think *highly* of God. He would not rise in our estimation by thus lowering His demands to mere 'bodily service;' for however unwilling we may feel to 'worship Him in spirit and in truth,' we are absolutely incapable of admiring or adoring a God who could reckon Himself worshipped *without* 'spirit and truth.' Accordingly, He is neither loved nor revered by those who content themselves with forms of bodily service. His character and authority stand just as low in their estimation as the level they bring His services to.

They see nothing attractive or trustworthy in God and the Lamb. They are merely *afraid* or *ashamed* to neglect all the forms of religion.

These facts deserve more notice than they usually receive. We are very ready to suspect, when we hear much about the necessity of *spiritual* worship, that it would require more time, and involve more attention, than is compatible with a due regard to the ordinary business of life. We even try to make out a case against it as impracticable or impossible. We allow, indeed, that something ought to be, and may be done, in the worship of God; but we very much doubt whether a uniform habit of spiritual devotion could be combined with temporal enterprise and enjoyment. It seems to require more leisure than the busy can command, and more thought and feeling than the active can afford. Thus we exaggerate and caricature its claims, by making them to clash with the duties of life.

This is unmanly; for it is not true that spiritual devotion makes any demand upon our time or attention beyond what we can pay without temporal loss or risk. No man can prove that an *honest* business would be injured by a devotional spirit. Business and prayer have been divorced by the vast majority of tradesmen, but the trade of the country is no real gainer from the separation. There is more of it, but it is less healthy in its action, and less sure in its results, than when it was more religious in its character. Our pious forefathers seldom failed to realize

a competency by their business. Their credit was not shaken, nor their ultimate success hindered, by their regular habits of closet, family, and public worship. They made less noise and dash in conducting their business, but they 'guided their affairs with discretion to the end.' The balance sheet of no single year enabled them to vie with the mansions or the equipages of hereditary wealth, but the balance sheet of successive years enabled many of them to retire from public life in sober affluence, and kept most of them in easy circumstances. If they had no sudden elevations, they had no sudden downfalls; and in old age, what pictures of vigorous health and venerable gentility our pious ancestors were! The rose was upon their cheek, and 'their grey hairs were a crown of glory' over it. They equally won and commanded respect, by their perfect urbanity and decorous manners. All eyes either blessed them in the gate, or blushed in their presence. Neither the fops nor the nabobs of business, however successful, obtain any such heart-homage now from the young or the old. The reason is obvious; they are mere men of the world, altogether of 'the earth, earthy.' Nothing about them beams or breathes of immortality. By no effort or stratagem can the opening or the enlarged mind link their lot with grace or glory. It is opulent or showy—that is all; and is that enough to live for? No; not even if all the appearance and the reality too were as easily obtained as they are naturally desired; but that they are not. Besides,

'what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'

Men of business are, in general, *calculating* men, but no class of men who have credit for this prudential faculty are more chargeable with 'reckoning without their host.' In general, they do not take God into their account at all, except to postpone His claims to the last. They adapt none of their measures for getting on in the world to the maxims of His grace or providence. His great moral *laws* against fraud and circumvention are, indeed, both recognised and revered in all honourable business to a very great extent. They must be so: business could not go on without them. But how few merchants or tradesmen have the wisdom to pause at the outset, or in their progress, and ask themselves, What will be best for me in the end? I may get on in the world without religion—many do. But still I may not—for many do not. Even clever men are not always fortunate men. Should I, however, be fortunate in this world, there is another world, and in it I cannot be happy. I must be for ever miserable without religion! I, indeed, both hear and think about becoming religious in the evening of life, but I must confess that I see very few who do so. I join with others in hoping the best, in the case of those who die decently, after having lived only for this world, but I feel that I should not like their chance for my *own* soul! I do not venture to pronounce or conjecture on their state, but neither durst I venture my

soul upon their soul's probabilities. I cannot wish to die their death! It may be safe, but it is too suspicious to hazard my soul's eternal happiness upon.

How few of our calculating men calculate even in this way! and yet this is little more than the plain application of plain common sense and common honesty to the consideration of familiar facts. Indeed, it would only be good common sense to grapple fairly with the question, What must be the natural effect upon my own mind of leaving no adequate time for prayer? I have many temptations to dispense with it now, and for years to come. I am getting so placed and pledged in the world, that I want all my time for my business. An immediate attention to closet piety seems utterly incompatible with my immediate interests. It would be more convenient for me to lay aside all devotional piety until I am more settled in life and business. Is it, however, quite sure, or at all likely, that I would become prayerful when I had got on somewhat well in the world? Now, years of neglect are certainly not likely to produce a new era of inclination to prayer. Might they not rather extinguish all sense of its necessity, or disincline me more than I now am? Besides, it cannot be safe to calculate that God would answer prayer years hence, even if I could calculate upon myself for becoming prayerful then. For why do I wish to keep clear of the closet now? It really is because I care more about this world than about the

next, more for time than for eternity, more for human beings than for the divine favour.

This is the fact, if I must speak out; and it is all naked and open to God, however I may conceal it from others. Now, is not this enough to prevent him from answering prayer, even if I did pray much and fervently, after having served myself at the expense of his immediate claims? In a word, would I bear such treatment from any man as I have thus thought of giving to God? Were any man, dependent on me for all his support and comfort in the evening of his life, to plan how much he could avoid me, until he could no longer do without me, would I welcome him when sheer necessity alone forced him to apply to me? True, God is not like man in this matter. Many have come to Him late, and yet have found both mercy and grace. But they did not *plan* to come late, nor delay in the face of such convictions as I feel. My neglect of prayer for the sake of business would be deliberate neglect. I see clearly both the sin and the shame of the liberties I am tempted to take with God. The real question, therefore, in my case is, not how God may treat the late prayers of those who do not know what they are about, but would He answer *my* late prayers? I do know what I am about when planning to keep clear of my closet. I cannot plead ignorance of either the duty or the danger. Shall I, then, dare to 'sin wilfully'? Ah! my convenient 'season' could not be 'an acceptable time,' Even my own conscience tells me so.

These, also, are not very profound calculations; but simple and sober as they are, they are not very common. They are, indeed, glanced at, when they *glare* upon the prayerless, but how few invite them or go fully into them, even when they force themselves upon the conscience! And it is not painful calculations only that are avoided; *prudential* reckoning is not common. A special Providence is acknowledged in words, but denied, indeed almost defied, in practice. How else could any man dream that the way to do well in the world is to put religion quite aside for years; is to push on without prayer; is to banish all concern about the soul and eternity? No man can show that this is a likely way to keep Providence on his side for good. It is, indeed, often a successful way, but always for evil of some kind. Success is a very *ominous* thing when it is obtained apart from piety. No misfortune nor poverty is a token of so much danger to the soul as prayerless prosperity. The 'evil things' of Lazarus were certainly trying things, but the 'good things' of Dives were curses in disguise.

I do not mean, of course, that there is nothing but *judgment* in prayerless prosperity. There may be much mercy in it for a time. God may allow it, in order to give the man every facility for becoming a pious man. For as some natures are so stubborn as to require the rod to bend them, others are so weak, or so mean, as to require some temporal blessings to conciliate them. They would not think

of God at all if nothing went well with them. In pity, therefore, to such minds, He places them in circumstances which furnish no excuse for the neglect of His great salvation. When, however, prosperity itself is perverted into an excuse for neglect and delay, then the blessing begins to rot into a curse. Dives' purple and plenty are then omens of eternal ruin, and will end in that, unless they are taken as *warnings* of it.

Would I then have a man to care nothing about success in business? Certainly not! A man utterly indifferent about his lot in this life is not likely to care much for the life to come. Success is a good thing when obtained by good means and applied to good purposes. Christians, acting as Christians, are as sure to get on as the cause of God is to go on. Providence will take care of their interests who are devoted to His glory. Both the silver and the gold are His, and He will make them run in the channels where the best use will be made of them. They will not flow long upon the old channels. They ran into the hands of the ungodly whilst there was nothing but conquest and commerce to push over the earth, because such hands were fit for nothing else. But now that the world is thrown open to the spiritual conquests of the church, wealth will change hands, because 'the Lord hath need of it' for His own work.

What I want to teach now, therefore, is the criminal folly of running in the face of providence by trying to get on in the world without God, or without such a

regard to His claims as amounts to devotion. Now, although this may not hinder success, it will, and must, render success a curse and not a blessing, in the end. It may gain the world, but it will ruin the soul. It will not, however, save the soul to combine devotion with business for the sake of gain. That process would end as fatally as the plan of separating them ends. Providence can neither be bought nor bribed over to any man's side by *selfish* prayers. It may come over to his side, and is likely to do so when he is more concerned about eternity than time, about his soul than his circumstances; but it will not strike a bargain with him to pay for prayer in money or bills. The grand object of prayer must be the salvation of the soul. Other blessings must neither be expected nor sought for, but as they are conducive to that end, and to the promotion of the divine glory.

It is not necessary, however, to keep the temporal bearings of providence out of sight, lest they should tempt us to selfishness. God has brought them into sight, and therefore they should not be overlooked nor underrated. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' Thus God asks no one to serve Him for nought, nor sends any one on a warfare at his own charges. What is good the Lord will give, and what is evil He makes to work for eventual good unto all that love Him. It is therefore both a wilful and gross mistake, to suspect that we should be losers by devotional piety. Many of the pious are indeed

very poor, but they would be still poorer than they are if they were not pious.

The design of all these preliminary hints is to solicit and conciliate your attention to that 'fervency of spirit in serving the Lord,' which the Lord connects with 'diligence in business.' Now, 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Such only are 'true worshippers;' and as the Father seeketh such to worship Him, thus we should seek to pray.

Mark the words! '*The Father seeketh such to worship Him.*' He finds them unsought in heaven, and shall He seek without finding on earth? Will *you* refuse to 'worship Him in spirit and in truth'? In the spirit of love and truth He invites and beseeches you to draw nigh to His mercy-seat, believing that He 'is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' Can you refuse to seek, when God thus assures you that you shall find all things really 'pertaining to life and godliness'? Remember, God will permit none to draw nigh to the throne of glory who refuse to draw nigh to the throne of grace. All who keep afar off from the latter will be kept by 'an impassable gulf' afar off from the former. Pray or perish is the only alternative! Can you wonder at this? Is it a hard or a harsh alternative? Consider! You must allow that something should be done to *prepare* for heaven. Now, could you name anything easier than prayer, which would be equally adapted to prepare your spirit 'to meet God' in peace and

glory? Try. You cannot. Nothing you can think of would have the same tendency to pave the way for the worship of eternity.

Oh, the wonder is that prayer is permitted, and that the Father should *seek* us to worship Him is wonder unspeakable! 'The Father seeketh' spiritual worship. Again, I ask, shall He seek it in vain from you? You will need such a Father through all eternity. You may soon need all His paternal pity in time, for you know not what trials may await you on earth. Should trials be, however, both few and slight in your lot, still you need such a Father to be its guardian and glory. There is no moral loveliness nor dawn of heaven in the splendour of godless prosperity. Its garlanded votary is a doomed victim to the judicial altar of vengeance; and the Judge will find you if the Father seek you in vain. 'The Father seeketh you!' Oh, let this sublime and solemn fact seize upon all the powers of your soul, and sink into all the recesses of your heart. He seeketh not fallen angels. Yea, with less effort than He puts forth in seeking you, even by a word or a wish, the Father of your spirit could create myriads of spirits, all of whom would vie for ever with the first created spirits in the universe in worshipping Him. But He loves better to redeem human spirits than to multiply angelic spirits. He prefers to seek and save a lost sheep, to creating new orders of worshipping intelligences. He wants the old order on earth brought nigh to Him before He begin another creation in heaven. He seeketh you

now. He will not, however, seek you always as a Father, nor for worship. He may soon seek you as a Judge for punishment, and then He will find you out. You may evade His call to the throne of grace, but you cannot evade His summons to the bar of judgment. You may refuse to pray, but you cannot resist punishment. Why, then, should you risk it, seeing the Father seeketh you to worship Him?

Do not, then, *mock* God by neglect or formality, if you would not provoke God to 'mock when your fear cometh.' You know it will come. The time is coming when you will be glad to 'pour out your heart before Him' with strong cries and tears. You intend to do so. You would do so *now*, if you were sure that you would never have another opportunity. Yea, if you strongly suspected that you may be unable or unwilling to pray on your deathbed, you would make a decided stand now against your reluctance, rather than risk the awful peradventure of a seared conscience, or a delirious understanding at last, for you cannot bear the horrid thought of dying insensible or insane, hardened or helpless.

Another consideration which I have found to be very useful is, How small in itself is the point on which I am standing out against God! I am not unwilling to be moral in my life, nor to be sound in my creed, nor to be regular in public worship, nor to do some good, according to my power, to the poor and the perishing. I can go on with some heart in public work and worship, but I stop, I stand out, at

my closet! There both my good principles and feelings break down shamefully; and at what? If it were at the idea of spending hours every day in my closet, there might be some excuse for shrinking back now and then from secret prayer, but I know better than to imagine that 'long prayers' are required or expected. I may talk to others or to myself about the want of time and the pressure of business, about care in the morning, and fatigue at night; but I cannot hide from myself the fact, that I find time for things of far less importance than prayer. I contrive, notwithstanding all the pressure of labour and fatigue, to read a good deal, to amuse myself not a little, and to improve myself somewhat in my favourite tastes. True, I require this relaxation. Both body and mind need to unbend after being on the strain all day. Health and spirits would break down altogether, if the routine of daily labour were not cheered by some exhilarating pursuit. All this is true; but what does it prove? Why, this, that I could find time for prayer too, if I had as much taste for it as for the pursuits in which I relax myself. Besides, if health or spirits be dear to me, I am really *perilling* both by heartless prayer; for however music or painting, literature or science, may soothe the mind after care and fatigue, they cannot *ensure* health or spirits. I am entirely dependent upon God for both. I cannot place myself out of the reach of His 'mighty hand' by any stratagem. Am I not, therefore, provoking that hand to strike me, whilst I am all but prayerless?

Thus, even upon my own principles, that something is necessary to diversify and lighten labour, lest health break down under it, I am imprudent, as well as criminal, in holding back from 'fervent prayer.' 'Ah, it is not the *time* it requires that holds me back. I am unwilling to give my *heart* up to the objects and emotions which belong to prayer. This is the real fact, whatever I may pretend. I am not indifferent about my soul or salvation; but I have no such love to them as loves devotion for their sake.' Have you not? Then you love something more and better than the salvation of your soul, more and better than you love eternal life. What is that something? Whatever it be, you cannot get it, nor keep it, in spite of providence, however much you love it. Indeed, if it be not a sinful object that your heart is set upon, you are taking the sure way to miss or lose it by thus preferring it to the great salvation. God will not bear with this preference. He will either cross you in it, or curse you with a portion in this life; and if the object of your preference be *sinful*, you are arousing all the perfections of His character against your soul. Do look at the awful dilemma you thus place yourself in! It is very awful, however laudable in itself may be the object you now love more than salvation; for you cannot get it and salvation too, whilst you prefer it to salvation. God will never place His gift of eternal life in the *left* hand of any man who gives his *right* hand to an earthly portion. God will not lay His great salvation beneath

the feet of your little projects. He will have it, and make it *uppermost* in your heart, or He will give you up to your heart's lusts. You cannot escape Him. Down your idols must come, or down your soul must go. This is the only alternative. Providence will either cross you at every step, until you are *heart-sick* of the world, and glad to give all your heart to salvation, or curse you with success until you are conscience-seared with prosperity. This is the invariable rule of providence. You are doing God great injustice, and your own understandings no credit, if you think this a harsh process or a hard alternative. It beams and burns with love throughout. It is all tender mercy in its intention. God could not do you a greater kindness than set His providence against the things which you prefer to His salvation; for, if He should not do so, and thus leave you to take up with an earthly portion, you would deplore it to all eternity; whereas, to all eternity you would adore Him, should He even lead you 'through fire and water' to the wealthy place of glory. It is not, however, necessary to bring matters to this issue. Neither your soul nor your circumstances need be thus perilled. The alternative set before you now is not the loss of all the world, or the loss of your soul. It is this: will you give your heart to your eternal interests from choice, or compel God either to break your heart with adversity, or to harden it with prosperity? Thus the choice you are called on to make now, is not between salvation and adversity. What is really 'good' for

you in this life God will give you, from the very moment you 'seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.' He knows all the other things you have need of, and He will *add* them to the gift of eternal life, whenever you lay hold upon it in a spirit becoming its value and holiness.

This, then, is the real connection in which God seeketh you to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He seeks you to do so for the sake of your own interests in both worlds, as well as for the sake of His own glory. Can you, then, refuse any longer to pour out your heart before God in secret? Are you now resolved to 'enter into your closet, and shut the door, and pray unto the Father, who seeth in secret, and rewardeth openly'? If so, enter, wondering and adoring that you are permitted to appear before God *alone*. You would not like friends nor strangers to hear the matter or the manner of your first fervent prayers. You have that to confess and deplore which they ought not to hear. God does not want them to witness your 'strong cries nor tears.' He wants all your secrets for Himself, and He will *tell* none of them to any one. He will inform angels of your repentance, that they may rejoice over you; but He will draw no human attention to what passes between you and Himself, except as He drew that of Ananias to Paul, by simply and delicately saying, '*Behold, he prayeth!*' God did not tell Ananias all that Paul told Him in secret. In like manner He will not betray your confidence when you confess your sins

He will humble you by revealing Himself to you; but He will not mortify you by exposing your case to others. Closet secrets are sacred with him! David knew this, and prayed thus, 'Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle.'

Enter your closet, also, determined to be thoroughly *honest* before God. Do not attempt to hush up anything, however painful it may be to confess freely. 'If your heart condemn you, God is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things' already. You cannot impose upon Him. All things in your heart and your history are naked and open to the eyes of the God with whom you have to do.

> 'He knows the words we mean to speak,
> Ere from our opening lips they break.'

Do not, therefore, try to conceal or equivocate on any point. The point to which you feel most reluctant, because most ashamed to come, is the very point to *begin* at in penitential confession. If you fail or falter there, your general confessions will all go for nothing. They will not even pave your way to the point which you thus dread and dislike to come to. Come to it, therefore, first and fully. You can easily go into general confessions of sin and shortcoming. They are sure to follow, if the great matter between God and conscience is honestly and humbly gone into.

It is not without occasion that I thus enforce thorough humiliation before God. You know that your heart holds back here. You are inclined to

skirt the edges or to skim the surface of your own case, and thus to hush up what most needs to be gone fully into. And nothing needs such a full disclosure before God as the sins and the idols which have hitherto made you ashamed, or afraid, or unwilling, to be alone with God in your closet. Enter then into your closet, open your Bible, and realize all that God is, from what it says of Him and for Him; and what less do you find at the mercy-seat than an embracing Father? What more could He show by voice or vision, than that He is as much and as essentially love as He is a Spirit.

Now, if all this do not reconcile and win you to secret prayer, what probability is there that you ever will be won? You may well tremble for yourself, if you are yet disposed to keep away from your closet. Take care! God may shut you out if you do not shut yourself in this night. Shut your closet door on the *inside;* for if He shut it on the *outside*, your future knocking will not make Him open it again. He is now within, calling for you to enter and commune with Him; but when once the Master of the secret house of prayer is 'risen up,' and ye begin to knock, He will say unto you, 'Depart; I never knew you.'

What shall I say more to commend or enforce devotional habits? Do you yet feel averse to them? If by any ingenuity you can still evade them, you are far gone in 'the snare of the devil.' Where, then, may he not lead you, if he can already keep you

away from that closet, where God waits to be gracious; where the Saviour manifests Himself to the soul; where the Holy Spirit helps infirmities, and sanctifies the heart; and where all who now fill heaven with praise, found, by prayer, the grace which led to glory? Arise, for the Master calleth thee! The Father seeketh thee to worship Him. Say to Him, with David, 'When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'

CHAPTER XIV.

MANLY REALIZATIONS OF INVISIBLE THINGS.

WHEN the Roman army besieged Jerusalem, the Temple was, of course, the last place to yield or open. Never was any place so defended. Mass after mass of the Jews threw themselves between the soldiers and the gates of the Temple, daring and defying death. It was literally over hills of carnage that the Roman legions forced their way into the Jewish Temple.

When they had thus effected an entrance, nothing, it is said, surprised them so much as the utter absence of all *images*. In their own temples at Rome, images of the gods smiled or frowned from every point and pillar, but in the Temple of Jerusalem, neither without nor within the veil, could they see any sign, symbol, shadow, or trace of the *form* or *person* of the God of Israel. Emblems of His grace and glory emblazoned the whole building, from the Holy of Holies to the court of the Gentiles, but no graven nor sculptured *image* of Jehovah was to be seen.

Now, if Judaism was thus singular from its entire want of all visible images of the true God, Christianity is still more singular, for it has no visible emblem even of the glory of God, nor any miraculous symbol of His grace.

All the chief objects of Christian faith are absolutely unseen. The Father of the Christian church is invisible; her Redeemer is invisible; her Comforter invisible; her ministering spirits invisible; her throne of grace invisible: her departed members invisible; even her future heaven is invisible.

This prevailing and permanent invisibility of all the supreme objects of our faith and hope is a *surprising* fact in itself, however custom may have rendered us familiar with it. Accordingly, when it is pointed out to us, we do wonder that a religion which promises so much should *show* us so little.

There must be some wise and weighty reason for thus concealing from the eye entirely what is so openly revealed to the understanding. God could easily appear annually on the circle of the heavens, or open occasionally the heaven of heavens to our view. He has done *greater* things for our world than this. It is not, therefore, from any want of love or solicitude for our souls that He keeps Himself and heaven invisible. It must be because we could not sustain the 'great sight' in the present state of our faculties. And those who remember how Moses quaked on Sinai, and how John fell as dead in Patmos, will not doubt this.

We may, however, inquire with perfect freedom, what is it that '*makes up*' to us for this strict and standing, and even studied invisibility of all the chief objects of faith and hope? Now, it is the *eternity* of their duration that makes up for the invisibility of their character. If they are all '*unseen*,' they are all '*eternal*.' This is the compensation, and it is an ample, a noble compensation, when duly considered.

Let us prepare to consider it duly, by marking the contrast between visible and invisible objects.

All things which are but temporal are visible. The very beasts are allowed to see the whole range of temporal things. It is not thought worth while to veil evanescent and temporary objects. They are all good enough to be worth showing, but none of them good enough to be worth concealing under the veil of mystery or of futurity. Thus temporal things, being no part of the soul's portion, are all thrown open to our bodily senses. None of them being everlasting, all of them are for ever seen.

All things which are visible are but temporal. Nothing earthly is eternal. Were there, however, any visible things eternal also, even they would be but temporal to us, because we ourselves are mortal. Were all earthly things everlasting in themselves, they would be only temporary to us, for we cannot last even if they could endure. But none of them will endure for ever. They are all destined to perish. The earth will be burnt up, and the very heavens will

pass away with a great noise. All that is now seen even of the works of creation, will be seen no more for ever, when the Angel swears that time shall be no more. And if the material works of God shall not outlast time nor outlive man, of course the works of man will perish too.

Thus there is nothing visible that is deemed worthy of preservation through eternity; nothing fit to be transferred from earth to heaven. No building, however sublime; no book, however wise; no science, however profound; no art, however noble; no ornament, however splendid; no amusement, however pleasant, will be spared from 'the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.'

Palaces and temples will perish in common with huts; cabinets and treasuries along with trifles; and libraries with the flowers of the field; for when God burns the book of nature, He will not save the volumes of learning or genius.

What a wreck is coming on temporal things! Wreck! The coming conflagration will not leave even

'A wreck behind.'

You have listened to me on this subject. Now listen to an *apostle:* 'Seeing all these things shall be burnt up, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!' (2 Pet. iii. 11.)

Do you regret the utter and eternal annihilation of any of these things? Is there any gem of art, or of science, or of genius, that you would wish spared, and

transferred to heaven? If you do, I share not this feeling with you. I rejoice in the utterness and eternity of the destruction, because it will destroy all the associations of vain and unholy thoughts and feelings which are now connected with temporal things; for when for ever out of being, they will be for ever out of mind.

Besides, heaven needs none of these things to perfect its bliss or glory. The very sun itself is not wanted there; for the *Lamb* is the light thereof. The universality and eternity of the final ruin tell, therefore, what heaven is. It is a place that can do for ever without them all; a state for which none of them are fit.

Thus happiness, real happiness, must be a very different thing from what we naturally suppose, seeing heaven and eternity fling such scorn upon all earthly good, that they will admit no particle of it amongst invisible things.

The things of time and sense cannot deserve so much of our heart and care, seeing they are all to be flung into the furnace of annihilation.

It is surely of less consequence than we make it, whether to be *rich* or *poor*, seeing we can carry nothing out of the world, and that nothing in it can be brought to heaven or hell. What, I ask again, what must *heaven* be, seeing it rejects all earthly joys as useless and worthless to its happiness? This single thought, simple as it is, would bear pondering for months!

And there is another hint that deserves consideration. What must hell be, where there are none of the joys of either heaven or earth to mitigate its miseries? The covetous and the worldly cannot take their gold even into hell with them; nor the intemperate their cups; nor the jovial their jests or songs. Under the solemn and salutary impression of these hints, let us now observe how *the eternity of unseen things makes up for their present invisibility.*

It proves to demonstration their infinite superiority to all earthly things. For were the things which are seen better than what they are, were they even as safe and satisfying as they were before sin cursed and corrupted them, still, as they are only temporal, they are unworthy and unfit to be a portion for immortal souls.

Our immortal spirits require eternal things, if they are to have any suitable portion, so that if unseen things were even fewer and less glorious than they are, the single fact of their being eternal throws into shade and insignificance, so far as the soul is concerned, all temporal things. For if we are to be as truly happy as we are certainly immortal, we must have immortal sources of happiness. We need everlasting peace, everlasting comforts, everlasting joys, and these the world cannot furnish, even if the joy it gives were perfect.

Were there, therefore, nothing unsatisfying, yea, nothing sinful, yea, nothing dangerous in an earthly portion, I would denounce it, and renounce it, on the

ground of its *short* duration. '*It is not eternal!*' ought to repel and prevent our souls from seeking their happiness in this world. '*It is eternal!*' ought to attract and determine us to seek first the kingdom of heaven, even if that kingdom were *inferior* to this earth.

The eternity of unseen things proves their intrinsic excellence. They derive their eternity from an excellence which *deserves* to be eternal. The glories of heaven are full and perfect, not because they are everlasting, but they are everlasting because they are perfect. Its crowns are unfading, because they deserve to flourish for ever; its mansions unfalling, because they deserve to stand for ever; its thrones immovable, because they deserve to endure for ever; its society undying, because it deserves to live for ever; its peace imperishable, because it deserves to reign for ever; its holiness unchangeable, because it deserves to last for ever. For as all earthly things are temporal just because they are imperfect, so all heavenly things are eternal just because they are infinitely perfect. This is the *moral* foundation of future happiness. It rests upon the intrinsic and essential moral worth of all its sources, and therefore cannot end nor alter, because holiness is its conservative principle.

The eternity of unseen things proves the amplitude and perfection of the work of Christ in heaven. When about to ascend there, He said, '*I go to prepare a place for you.*' And ample and glorious that pre-

paration must be, seeing that nothing in all the prepared place will ever require to be *altered*. What the Saviour made heaven when He sat down on the throne, that heaven will remain throughout eternity. Yes; all the unseen things which He has laid up for them that love Him are eternal things. No crown of glory shall ever dim, no palm of victory ever wither, no harp of gold ever break, no fruit of the tree of life ever fail, no fountain of the water of life ever dry, no element or item of celestial bliss ever pass away, but all things continue, like Christ Himself, the same for ever.

What a work, therefore, was His in heaven! We judge of His atoning work on earth by the many sons it will bring to glory, and fit for glory, and thus learn to admire and adore the merits of that death which obtained for them eternal redemption. And thus we should judge, thus we should learn. But let us judge also, and equally well, from the number and eternity of the glories of heaven, the value of that life which He lived there, whilst preparing the place which He opened by His blood.

The eternity of unseen things proves the perfection of the sanctifying and ennobling work of the Holy Spirit upon the heirs of heaven. The redeemed will be fully prepared by the Spirit to enjoy all that the Saviour has prepared for them. There will be nothing in all the eternal weight of glory too high for their minds, or too holy for their taste, or too extensive for their powers. The eternal light of heaven

will not be too dazzling for their eyes, nor its eternal worship too constant for their strength, nor its eternal laws too spiritual for their hearts, nor its eternal fellowship too wide or too warm for their inclination; but they will be mentally and morally fit for all the bliss and business of heaven, and for an *eternity* of it all.

This shows us in sunlight what the work of the Holy Spirit is. It will bring up the mind, and the body too, to the lofty height of heaven's highest, purest, and eternal enjoyments. It will run out all the powers and affections of the soul in grand parallel with the whole range of heavenly things. It will harmonize all its tastes and desires with all the sources of Divine happiness, and knit in everlasting bonds of love the hearts of all saints to each other, and of all saints and angels together.

Oh! *quench* not, *grieve* not the Holy Spirit, if He has begun this good work in you; for this is the length to which it must be carried on—the length to which He will carry it on—in all the heirs of salvation. We must be made as meet for the inheritance of the saints in light as it is meet for them.

And with equal solicitude and solemnity I beseech and adjure you, if you are stifling and evading your convictions of guilt and danger, to stop. 'Resist not the Holy Spirit.' What would you think of my conduct, if, when my soul is called into eternity, I were to resist the angels who came to bear it into heaven; to resist the beckoning smiles of my children and

friends, who wait to welcome me; to resist the attraction of heaven's glories as they shine and sound through its open gates? Neglecter of the great salvation! You are resisting more than all this, whilst banishing and evading the strivings of conscience and the force of truth. You are resisting the love of God, the blood of the Lamb, the drawings of the Spirit. Oh stop, yield; and from this moment stand out no more against the claims of your soul and eternity.

The eternity of unseen things proves how fully the happiness of heaven will arise from fellowship with the Godhead and conformity to the Divine image. I would not venture to give utterance to my sentiments on this subject, did I not suspect that what I have hinted on the eternity of unseen things may suggest the question, Will there, then, be nothing *new* added as eternal ages roll on? Will the scene be for ever the same?

I meet this thought not in a speculative spirit, but to throw your mind on the sublime fact, that eternal bliss will flow infinitely more from the presence and image of God, than from the glories of heaven as a *place*. As a place, it will be to saints and angels what it is to God and the Lamb, not the *cause* of their eternal happiness, nor the chief source of it, but the chief *seat* of it. The real source of felicity will be the company and communion enjoyed with the Godhead, and that would make a heaven even on earth, or indeed anywhere. As a place, however, heaven

is altogether becoming and worthy of the majesty and glory of Jehovah; and as it suits *His* Infinite mind, and will please Him for ever, it cannot fail to satisfy for ever all His redeemed family. They will no more want nor wish for a new heaven than for a new Father, a new Redeemer, or a new Comforter.

Besides, eternal things are perfect, and pure spirits can never tire of perfection, because, as it admits of no change for the better, so they can never wish a change for the worse. There is, therefore, no more reason to regret the unchangeableness of heaven itself, than that God will be the same for ever; for it will be for ever as unnecessary and impossible to wish a change of scene, society, or service, as to wish the love of God to cool, or the power of God to decay, or the wisdom of God to fail, or the glory of God to diminish.

In thus maintaining that heaven will never be altered, because it cannot be altered for the better, nothing is, however, further from my design than to convey the idea that there will be no *new* sources of enjoyment as eternity goes on. There may, there most likely will be many; but whatever they be, they will not displace the old. New eternal things, if such be created

'Whilst immortality endures,'

will all, like the old, make and keep God Himself the chief source of happiness to all the armies of heaven.

'Whom have I in heaven but Thee'

will be the everlasting and universal language of the church, even when all heaven is in her possession. I want you to see and feel that eternal happiness *will* and *must* come from God Himself. All the value, and sweetness, and glory of everything in heaven, will arise from everything leading and lifting the soul to God, as its centre and portion, and thus making Him all and in all, even amidst all the splendours of the heaven of heavens. You are therefore duping and deceiving yourself, if you imagine that you may reach heaven without seeking your chief happiness in God here. Those who take no pleasure in Him here will get none in Him there. Those who dislike to think of God, to pray to Him, or commune with Him, never can dwell with Him.

The unseen things of heaven are not, however, the only eternal things which we ought to look at in the light of revelation. Whatever any one may think of the utter invisibility of all the eternal things of heaven, no one can doubt the wisdom or the kindness of keeping the eternal things of hell 'unseen.' Any unlocking of the bottomless pit but by the key of revelation, any uncovering of Tophet but by the hand of revelation, any illumination of the blackness of darkness, except by the lamps and suns of Scripture, would be overwhelming and intolerable. A visible hell would embitter life, and even embarrass godliness. In mercy, therefore, it is kept invisible!

But if the punishments of hell be unseen, they are

eternal, whatever their nature may be. If the society of devils is unseen, it is eternal. If the curse of God is unseen, it is eternal. If the wrath of the Lamb is unseen, it is eternal. If the impassable gulf be unseen, it is eternal.

Shall I stop? Will you stop and turn fully from the way that goeth down to the chambers of hell? You cannot bear me to *uncover* destruction in this way. I cannot bear to see you *risking* it. You think me harsh for dwelling thus on eternal horrors. I think you frantic in neglecting the only Saviour from the wrath to come. But I forget! This is not a matter between *you* and *me*. What I think of you, or you of me, is not worth a thought at this moment. The God who prepared this hell for Satan and his angels, and who gave His Son to save man from it, thinks you infatuated in neglecting this great salvation, and asks, in melting amazement, 'Why will ye die?' The Saviour who died to deliver from the wrath to come, thinks you ungrateful and irrational in keeping away from Him, and asks, 'How often would I have gathered you under my wings!' Angels are amazed, and cry down from their thrones, 'Who would not fear and glorify God?' for the great day of His wrath is coming. Well all these may! for, hark! the very hypocrites in Zion cry, 'Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?'

So far, however, these hints and appeals create rather a *whirl* of thought and feeling than give any definite character or direction to either. Indeed, if

you would think to any purpose on this subject, you must think for yourself; and, like the high priest, when he entered the Holy of Holies, go 'alone' within the veil. And this, though solemn, should not be difficult, for the invisible will soon be all as visible to you as it is eternal. Your spirit must soon pass within the veil. It is not, it cannot therefore be impossible to enter in thought now. Your spirit has all the powers now which it will have then. Then, indeed, its powers will be more powerful and its emotions more prompt, but still it will be a reflecting spirit, a feeling spirit, a realizing spirit, even when disembodied, and breaking away on the wings of the wind amongst the realities of eternity. These will all be new to it, of course, but it will not have one new faculty of discernment or taste. Eternity will burst upon the faculties you possess, and affect your spirit according to the moral state of your spirit when it exchanges worlds. Then all the new scenes will act upon your old powers of mind and conscience. You will not be quite another being when you enter another world. You will be substantially when you pass the boundary, whatever you are intellectually and morally, when you touch the boundary between time and eternity. The transition will not transform an element nor an atom of your character. It will bring out all that is within you, but it will implant no new mental power or moral taste. It will complete and confirm your good or evil, but it will not alter your principles. You will be and do, think and

feel, amidst the realities of eternity, exactly as you are affected by the revelations of them, and be as much *yourself* after death as before it.

It is therefore possible to tell, and therefore proper to try, how your spirit is likely to feel in the world of spirits. It can only feel in one of two ways—as a *saved* or as a *lost* spirit; and the natural emotions of either state are too strong to be doubtful, or 'hard to be understood.' They reveal what they will be the moment we suppose ourselves lost or saved. They break out at once in their true characters whenever we realize ourselves awaking in heaven or hell.

Did you ever allow yourself to suppose the *worst*? I mean for the sole purpose of escaping it. It is, I know, too painful to dwell on long. Indeed, the spirit requires *dragging*, in order to bring it to the brink of hell, and *chaining*, in order to keep it there, until it is willing to '*flee* from the wrath to come.' It is soon willing to get away from the vision of that wrath, and to forget the revelation of it. One look into the bottomless pit, however hasty, makes the soul cry out, 'Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' But the glance which extorts this shriek does not endear Him who 'delivereth from the wrath to come.' The soul can rush away from the sight of it without fleeing to Christ for refuge. Most souls, alas! flee to bustle or amusement to forget all they saw and felt whilst looking at uncovered destruction.

You have done so again and again. Even now, you are not willing to be drawn into a position which

would compel you to realize the wrath to come. You could ask, Is it necessary to do so, in order to be religious? You are inclined, perhaps, to argue, that working on your fears is not winning your heart. Well, I am quite ready to grant this. Love, not fear, is the great principle of all true piety. But if you do not love God or the Saviour, holiness or devotion, you have cause for fear, and need for having your fears wrought upon. Besides (for it is useless to conceal the fact), you have other fears and dislikes too, than the *direct* terrors of this subject. You see and dislike the sight, that you could not keep your eye on hell, and keep out of your closet so much. You are eagle-eyed in discerning how the fear of wrath would involve more devotion and self-denial than you think pleasant or convenient. It is not, therefore, either your horror or hatred of hell that is the chief cause of your aversion to this subject. You are quite as much influenced by your dislike to certain duties which arise out of it, and by your distaste for that frame of spirit which the pursuit of heaven implies and enforces. In a word, you know very well, that were you in love with the way of salvation and holiness, you would have nothing to fear from any contemplation of the wrath to come. You fear to look at it, because you hate some of the things involved in fleeing from it.

In vain you try to palliate any man's neglect of salvation, by the claims of his business, or the cares of his lot, or the strength of his passions. This non-

sense may be talked at the gates of the market or the mansion, but not at the gates of hell. There the soul alone appears valuable, salvation alone worthy of its love, piety alone seems common sense. You cannot doubt this, whilst you judge there. That place was not 'prepared' for men; it was 'prepared for the devil and his angels.' And if they deserved it for one act of open rebellion against God, what else or less do men deserve, who lived a *life* of rebellion and neglect? Besides, what else are they *fit* for who cared nothing about God, thought nothing about the Saviour, and minded not the things of the Spirit? Not for heaven, for the Lamb is the glory of it, and they neglected Him entirely; salvation is the theme of it, and they shut their eyes to the value and the necessity of its blessings; holiness is the beauty and the basis of heaven, and they hated it. Thus they lived and died, alienated and averse to all that constitutes the bliss of heaven.

You do not see this as I see it; and what is worse, not as God shows it, if you can retire from the awful sight without trembling for yourself. The pleasures which betrayed the lost tempt you, the gains which ensnared them tempt you, the follies which infatuated them tempt you, the sins which ruined them tempt you; and you must sink as they sank if you act as they did. They acted only for time, and eternity left them to the consequences of their foolish and criminal choice.

How readily the spirit springs up from the gates of

hell to the gates of heaven! This, however, is no proof of heavenly-mindedness. It is a proof that our spirits are capable of immortal happiness, and that, in some sense, they long for a glorious immortality when a gloomy one has been vividly before them. But the real question is: What relish have our spirits for the heaven of the Bible, as the throne of God and the Lamb, and as the seat of holiness? We may love, indeed we cannot dislike, an eternity of joy and peace. An atheist could not hate that, nor a profligate despise it. God has taken care that no man can think lightly of the glory He has prepared for them that love Him, by making it too great and good to be unattractive. He has, however, made it all as holy as it is beautiful, and thus thrown us upon holy principles as well as upon lofty prospects of happiness. We must love Him, if we would live with Him. We must be like Him, if we would see Him as He is. We must serve Him here, if we would enjoy Him there. This, even all this, however, should not appear any hardship to you. It is both the bliss and glory of all who are in heaven. By pursuing this, they reached the gates of the New Jerusalem, and there imperfection fell off from their spirit, and they entered into the city, to go no more out.

CHAPTER XV.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

MANY who see much glory in Christ, seem utterly blind to the glory of the church of Christ. The advantage and honour, as well as the necessity, of belonging to Him they admit and feel; but they attach very little importance to union with His church, except for sacramental purposes. Many would not give 'themselves to the church' at all, if they could reconcile the neglect of the sacrament with the duty of giving themselves fully 'unto the Lord.' Could they get over the point and pathos of His dying command, or obey that command out of the church, they would be quite content to have neither a name nor a place amongst the 'living in Jerusalem.' They would even prefer to have none, if they could persuade themselves that they ran no risk in disobeying the last injunction of the Saviour. Thus they see neither sin nor danger in not giving themselves unto the church; feel neither loss nor shame for not belonging to it, but just so far as the neglect of the sacrament involves something of both. If you

think or feel so, you have never studied this subject. You may have glanced at it, and disputed about it, but you have not weighed it. No mind capable of weighing it in the golden balances of the sanctuary ever did so without feeling itself thrown as it were into a *new* world, with new ideas and emotions. The moment church fellowship is understood, it is appreciated. It is not fully understood by any man who does not feel through all his soul, that the act of joining the church on earth is next in sublimity and solemnity to the act of joining 'the general assembly of the church of the first-born in heaven.' Nothing is so like union with the church triumphant as union with the church militant.

You do not understand either church if this assertion seem doubtful or extravagant to you. And if you can *smile* at it as official vapouring, or as ministerial complacency, pluming itself upon office, you do no credit to your own taste or discernment. For, what other society on earth bears *any* resemblance to the church in heaven? If the church on earth be not like it, all other assemblies are unlike it. The theatre, the ball-room, the banqueting-house, even the lecture-rooms of science and literature, bear none of the image, and breathe none of the spirit, of the general assembly. Thus, if the church has but little of the celestial aspect, the world has none of it.

I do not forget that there are other religious societies besides the churches of Christ. These, however, although 'in the world,' are not 'of the world.'

Whatever likeness they bear to heaven, they derive from their connection with the churches. They are, in fact, the children of the church of Christ; and thus living and lovely proofs that there is more glory in the church than superficial observers inquire or comprehend.

I am very anxious to interest you in this subject. It deserves your attention, however commonplace it may seem from these introductory hints; for all heaven is occupied and absorbed with the interests of the church on earth. She is the Father's family, the Son's inheritance, and the Spirit's temple. For her the wheels of nature roll stedfastly, and the wheels of providence wisely. To her all the innumerable company of angels are ministering spirits, and all the events of time purifying discipline or efficient help. In her principalities and powers, although inhabiting heavenly places, learn 'the manifold wisdom of God.' Time cannot outlive the church, nor eternity displace or eclipse her in the Divine favour. Her completion will be the signal for the end of time on earth, and for the jubilee of eternity throughout the universe. She is now 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world,' and she will be for ever the wonder of all worlds. She alone, of all the intelligent creation, is '*the Bride, the Lamb's wife.*'

You forget all this whilst you confine your attention to the little personal question: 'What good could I get from joining any church in my neighbourhood?' Indeed, you do not *see* these things whilst you look

either at a select handful, or at a promiscuous crowd of communicants. A church in that light may present few attractions to you, and make no impression on you except so far as her attention to the sàcrament reproves your neglect. You may even try in vain to associate the 'glorious things spoken of Zion,' with the little or the great hills of Zion around you, whilst you think only of those churches you can see. Any of them may seem, when tried by your standard of profit or pleasure, to promise but very little when they say, 'Come with us, and we will do thee good.' Perhaps you have almost smiled at this invitation, and said to yourself: 'What good could they do to me, beyond welcoming me to the sacrament, or visiting me if I were sick?' You ought to know better than to argue thus. The poorest church of Christ can do you more real good than the wealthiest or the wisest society of philosophers. It can introduce you to the fellowship of the universal church of Christ, which neither the patent of kings nor the diploma of colleges could do. It can make you a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, which you cannot make yourself, nor be made by any other society on earth. None but a church can give you a name and a place in the catholic church of God.

And is it no '*good*' to be introduced with fervent prayer and cordial welcomes into

'The sacramental host of God'?

As you now stand, you are an 'alien from the commonwealth' of His Israel, even if you be not a

'stranger to the covenant of promise.' Now, although this may not seem a great loss, nor a deep shame, so far as relates to the church which invites you, it is both, in relation to the universal church. Not to be within her sacred pale is awful and ignominious, even if it were not unsafe. Look at your position! It is repulsive as well as perilous, shameful as well as sinful, especially if you have given yourself to the Lord. What! rely on His blood, and withhold yourself from the church He purchased with His own blood? What! own Him as 'head,' and refuse to be a member of that 'body' of which He is head? What! revere Him as the King of Zion, and yet keep out of Zion? Oh, had He cared as little for the church as you have done, there would have been no salvation for you. Had He taken no more interest in her than you feel, she would have been unable to preserve or present to you the gospel of life and immortality. And were all who have given themselves to the Lord to follow your example, there would soon be no church; and then, what would become of the world?

Again, I remind you that it is not the claims of the church which directly appeals to you that you have chiefly to consider. That individual church may labour under many disadvantages. It may be small, or poor, or despised by the world, or not very intelligent or harmonious in itself. Thus it may have little attraction for you, and even expose you to some inconvenience. The question is, however, are there in it prayerful and holy men, confederated around the

Cross, and consecrated to the glory of God? If so, it is a church of Christ, warranted and qualified to introduce you to the fellowship of the universal church. It is therefore that 'goodly fellowship' you are neglecting, whilst you stand aloof from the fellowship of its accredited agent, the church in your neighbourhood.

You may not have intended nor seen this hitherto. You may have thought only of the *local* fellowship, and thus have overlooked the claims of the 'goodly fellowship' of prophets and apostles, of the noble army of martyrs, of the innumerable company of angels, of the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven; but

> 'The church on earth, and all the dead,
> But one communion make.'

It is therefore this vast, holy, and glorious communion that you have kept out of, whilst keeping out of the local fellowship of the saints. And is this no loss?

Say not that it is rather an imaginary than a real loss. I know that neither prophets nor apostles, saints nor martyrs, can descend from their thrones or mansions to hold any real intercourse with your spirit. Even the spirits you love best of all that sing around the throne of glory,—the ancestral, parental, or filial spirits you delight to realize, as remembering and loving you, — cannot visit nor unveil themselves to you, except in your slumbers.

But is it an imaginary advantage to have relative and kindred spirits in heaven? Would it be no *real* loss to have no such golden links between your heart and heaven? You will not say so. You do not think so. You derive positive good, and exquisite pleasure, from the sweet consciousness that you are related to some glorified spirits. This is a powerful motive to follow their faith and patience. And is not brotherhood with 'the whole family in heaven and on earth' a soothing consciousness and a sublime motive? Would it not confirm your faith, and promote your holiness, and inspire your hopes, to think that you were a joint heir with all the 'great cloud of witnesses,' and sure of the right hand of fellowship from all the hosts of heaven? Again, I say, it is from this communion of saints you stand apart, whilst you stand 'without' the sacred pale of the Christian church.

No emblems, perhaps, illustrate so fully or so justly the influence of the church upon the world as those which Christ employed when He founded His church. Whilst His 'little flock' sat at His feet on the mount, surrounded by the thousands of Israel, He pointed and appealed to His disciples, saying, 'Ye are the *salt* of the earth, ye are the *light* of the world.' This was language which Jews could not misunderstand. They heard Christ ascribe to His disciples a moral influence so mighty that, like salt, it would preserve the earth from destruction, and, like light, fill it with glory. And this was no empty

boast nor extravagant compliment, whatever it may have appeared at the time to either his friends or enemies. Neither, perhaps, believed it at the time; but many years did not elapse before these bold words were proved to be 'the words of truth and soberness.' From the day of Pentecost, until the expulsion of the apostles from Jerusalem, Jerusalem saw, from the illumination of thousands of her own children, how the church of Christ would become the light of the world. It eclipsed for a time all the luminaries of the temple. It might have been 'the cloud of glory' returned again to the mercy-seat, and absorbing all attention to itself, so completely did the new church outshine the old Temple in gifts and graces. Multitudes even of the priests, as well as the people, believed. 'A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.' Thus it was soon shown how the church was to be the light of the world; for even in Jerusalem the combined power of the altar and the throne could not extinguish nor eclipse her radiance. And that she was emphatically the salt of the earth, was signally proved on the same spot. The moment that the Christian church was withdrawn from Jerusalem the city fell, 'and great was the fall thereof.' Whilst the Christians remained in it, they were the salt of it. The Roman eagles could not tear the prey, until the Christian doves flew to the mountains. Whilst they remained, their presence was a preserving salt to the city and the nation.

Now, the real church of Christ has always been

the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. She has never so 'lost her savour' as not to be both the preserving and purifying salt of the earth, nor ever so lost her golden candlestick, as not to be the only true light of the world.

Look well at this matter. I want you to see with your own eyes, the conservative and sanctifying agency which is the strength and hope of the world. Sciolists, and men who have not time to think, mystify this subject by 'great swelling words' about patriotism, philosophy, commerce, the march of intellect, and the progress of society, as if these things explained, or had produced, or now upheld the present state of the world. These things themselves require to be *accounted* for. They have been, and are, the causes of much good; but the question is, *what caused them?* They are only the *effects* of superior causes. Neither their origin nor their efficiency is from themselves. All that is good or wise in national principles and character has been taught, or sublimated, or sustained by the Christian church. She was the salt that preserved whatever was noble, humane, or enterprising in the nations she Christianized, and the light that led them on to whatever moral grandeur they may have reached. Without *her*, Britain and America could have done nothing of what is greatest and best in their character; just as, without Christ, her head, she could have done nothing for them, or for the world.

But how few think of this! How many, when

this assertion is made, would say in the spirit of Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' They are so accustomed to look at good kings, or wise cabinets, or wholesome laws, or glorious revolutions, as the real causes of national improvement, that they rarely notice the influence of the church. So little do the generality understand her character or place, that they would ask with a sneer: What church is either the salt of the earth, or the light of the world? Having started this question, they would follow it up by affirming that the Popish church has retarded the progress of society; that the Protestant establishments have not taken the lead in the march of civil or religious liberty; that the Voluntary churches are too poor or too much divided to put forth any great influence upon the world or the nation. When they have said all this, they imagine that the matter is settled, and turn with complacency to the politics, the literature, and the commercial spirit of the age as the grand agencies and elements of the moral world.

This is trifling with both facts and principles. The real and only church of Christ in the nation is the whole body of spiritual Christians. His British church is, and ever has been, 'the faithful in the land.' And they are, and they have been, both its salt and its light. But for them, the Word of God would never have been translated into our own tongue nor diffused throughout the nation. But for them, the worship of God would not have found sanctuaries nor collected assemblies. It was the place which

truth and devotion held in their hearts that won for truth and devotion whatever place they have in the land. Had they loved the Bible or the sanctuary less, the Bible would not have given law to legislation, nor the sanctuary order to society. But they 'held forth the word of life' so openly and stedfastly, so solemnly and devoutly, that kings were compelled to do it homage upon their thrones, and statesmen to adjust their policy to its principles.

'*The first works*' of the first Christian churches bore no small resemblance to the finished works of creation. Both were 'very good.' Then the church, like the sun, was the light of the world; like the sea, she flowed into all the channels of the earth to cover them with the knowledge of the Lord; like the tree of life, she yielded her sanative leaves for the healing of the nations as freely as her ripe fruits for the nourishment of her children. Her works of faith embraced the *spread* of the truth she believed, as well as the personal character and spirit which should ever adorn its doctrines; and her labour of love aimed at the good of all men, as well as of the household of faith.

Whilst the Christian church was thus 'fair as the moon,' she was 'terrible as an army with banners' to all temples and thrones where 'glory to God and good-will to men' were unknown or contemned principles. The Sanhedrim trembled at her holy aspect, it was at once so calm and heroic. The

high priests of Jupiter and Baal recognised in the moral and miraculous powers of the church, *levers* that would turn the world upside down, if plied in the same spirit as they had been planted on the vantage ground of Calvary. Philosophers and statesmen doubted very much whether 'this work would come to nought.' Even the Cæsars suspected the stability of the imperial throne, and girt the purple more closely around them to conceal their fears.

This involuntary homage of fear, thus universally paid to the church of Christ by Judaism and heathenism, by philosophy and policy, must have been wrung from them by the *evangelizing* spirit of the church. Nothing but her avowed *designs* upon the whole world could have awakened such jealousy in all 'high places,' for it began whilst her numbers were too few to be formidable, and whilst her resources could not exempt even her apostles from labour or poverty. The temples and thrones of that time, however much they may have hated the purity of faith or practice in the infant churches, could not have feared these churches, but for their public exhibition of the commission of Christ to '*preach the gospel to every creature.*' That commission, however, as then held, and hallowed, and avowed by all Christians, was sufficient cause for political and ecclesiastical alarm to all Jewish and heathen powers; for no man, nor impostor, had ever dared to challenge the subjection of the whole world to 'one faith.' No handful of men, without money or influence, had ever set the

world at defiance, or publicly pledged themselves to conquer it without carnal weapons. This was 'a new thing on the earth,' and the rulers of the earth recognised its peculiarity at once. It had none of the forms of force or fraud, and nothing of the spirit of any sect or system, with which policy and power had ever grappled. Christianity was confident exactly in proportion to its apparent weakness, and its votaries waxed only more resolute as they were singled out for victims. The martyrdom of an apostle or an evangelist, instead of intimidating the adherents of the churches, rallied them, and determined undecided attendants to '*be baptized for the dead.*' Every champion that fell, fell like a grain of corn into the earth, to produce much fruit. What could senates or synagogues, priests or philosophers, make of all this? It was 'not the manner of men,' and accordingly it baffled the sagacity of the master-spirits of the age. They had no rules nor experience which could fathom it. It defied their arms by meekness, and their arts by simplicity.

This was not, however, the only singularity of the primitive churches. They reposed all their hopes of success and safety upon the arm of God. '*If God be for us, who can be against us?*' was a question which silenced all their own fears; and as they never looked to any other quarter for support, and to Him only by *prayer*, it also staggered their enemies. They could give no answer to it. It was a question which defied their gods as well as themselves, and thus forced

upon them the idea of a God who despised all the divinities of Olympus and the Empyrean. And then they could not shut their eyes to the fact that, whoever He was, His worshippers evinced a confidence in Him which was unlike all popular faith, and unallied with any of the ordinary methods of propitiating the divine favour. It was not a confidence acquired or sustained by attempts to appease His anger with costly sacrifices, or to win His aid by splendid temples. It gathered no strength from rich altars, nor from rigid penances. It simply leaned on the Cross, and looked to the mercy-seat by prayer alone. And by that, it bore an aspect and breathed a spirit which were never seen around the altars of Greece or Rome, even when they flushed the heavens with the blaze of national holocausts. And then all this holy confidence had respect chiefly to the *spread* of the Gospel. It was not cherished by the first believers for the mere sake of their own personal comfort or composure. They cultivated faith in God, in order that they might do the *work* as well as suffer the will of God on earth. The apostolic churches felt themselves pledged, both by the letter and the spirit of the apostolic commission, to take care that the word of the Lord should 'sound out' from them; that they should 'hold forth the word of life,' and thus be fellow-helpers to the truth.

They also lived, avowedly and habitually, for eternity. In its solemn lights and shadows they looked upon a perishing world at large, and upon

the souls of their immediate neighbours. They so realized the judgment-seat of Christ, that they kept, as it were, His commission for ever lying upon it, as one of '*the books* which will be opened' when the saved are confronted with the lost. Thus they seem to have read it with much of the same spirit as they expected to *hear* it, when the Judge should try their stewardship 'of the manifold grace of God,' by what they had done to make that grace '*appear unto all men.*' Accordingly, they exerted themselves to be and do all for the world which the hope or fear of meeting the world at the bar of God inspired.

It is, I am aware, as easy to pay sweeping compliments to primitive times as to advance sweeping charges against modern times. I do not, however, forget that all this is not true of all the first Christians individually, nor equally true of all the first churches. There were tares amongst the wheat even then. This, however, only renders 'the first works' of the churches which did work the more amazing. The wonder increases by the decrease of numbers, which is thus forced upon our notice, when we take into account the faults and factions recorded and reproved in the epistles to the churches. This, like the thinning of Gideon's army, only makes the vigour and victories of the working churches the more signal and surprising.

The historical details of what they did and attempted, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, are not necessary here, in order to justify the

general view now given of their character and labours. The well-known actual *results* of primitive zeal and fidelity prove how much they must have done and attempted for the conversion of the world. The world was soon turned 'upside down,' and they did it. Judaism did not fall in Palestine by its own weight, nor by the Roman arms, until Christians had sapped its foundations. Platonism was not displaced in Greece, nor Epicureanism in Rome, without Christian effort and prayer. The olive of Minerva did not wither upon the Hymettus, nor the laurel of Mars upon Mount Aventine, from age, but from successive scathings of holy fire, scattered by holy men. The temples of Jupiter were not forsaken without being summoned and assailed, nor the altars of Venus overthrown without a struggle. The heathenism of the eastern and western empire faded and fell before the brightness of the eastern and western churches.

Christianity thus fought every step of her way, with the sword of the Spirit, from an upper room in Jerusalem into the seats of philosophy, and the palace of Cæsar. Alone she did it! Wherever her children laid her 'sure foundation-stone' of hope and holiness, they had to roll it up mountains of peril, and through valleys of privation, with their own hands and at their own expense. God was, indeed, with them, but they also were with Him. They wrought for Him, whilst He wrought by them. All 'the increase' He gave by His Spirit was given to the planting and watering of His word in the field of the world. All that in-

crease was, however, emphatically not by their might nor by their power, but 'by the Spirit of the Lord;' for whatever might or power they had, He both created and sustained it. It was all the fruit of the Spirit. Their will and power to work for God, as well as the success of their labour, came down from the same source.

This spread of the Gospel during the first and second centuries was so rapid, irresistible, and extensive, that it cannot be at all accounted for by any human means or principles. Nothing explains it rationally but the work of the Holy Spirit and the workings of a special providence, co-operating effectually with efficient Christian means and efforts. But this process, however supernatural, explains it all as naturally as sun and rain account for seed-time and harvest. It is not, therefore, without cause that theologians charge infidels with absurdity as well as impiety for attempting to refer the spread of the Gospel to human means and local circumstances. Gibbon merges the historian in the theorist, and Hume the philosopher in the fanatic, when they attempt this. They could not have evinced more arrant folly, or arrogant effrontery, had they set themselves to prove that seed and soil, if well managed, can produce harvests without sun and rain.

It is equally instructive and delightful to trace the early triumphs of Christianity throughout the Roman empire. They at once evince the truth of the Gospel, and unveil the secrets of its success, and thus send a

glowing impulse to the heart in favour of fellowship with 'the communion of saints.' Who would be an 'alien' from that commonwealth of Israel which God has so long sustained and signally honoured? 'Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without?'

CHAPTER XVI.

MANLY ESTIMATES OF DIVINE REVELATION.

WERE you ever struck with John's sublime summary of Revelation, when he says of Christ, 'In Him was life; and the life was the light of men'? If not, the study of it will make the diamond of truth blaze with new splendour.

When you consider that God is invisible, and that eternal things are unseen, is it not astonishing that we know so much of both? Both, indeed, surpass all comprehension; but neither their infinity nor their invisibility prevents us from knowing enough for our satisfaction. We have, in regard to God and eternity, as much light as we can use, and need to be at no loss what to think of Him or it. Accordingly we are not, in general, but have, upon the whole, such ideas of God as confirm our sense of obligation, and such views of the future state as impress our minds whenever we reflect seriously.

Our knowledge of these unseen objects, however limited and superficial compared to what it might be, yet, compared with the dim and deformed notions of

the heathen, is open vision; compared even with the clearest and loftiest discoveries of human philosophy it is so, for the world even by wisdom knew not God. Infidel philosophers may boast of sitting at the feet of Plato and Socrates; but if Plato and Socrates were the men they are said to have been, and alive now, they would give their own palm to a well-educated child in a Sunday-school—I mean in matters of religion; for such ideas as God is love, God is a father, God is just, and yet a Saviour, never dawned upon their mighty minds as facts or conjectures. This, however, is the light in which God appears to us; in which we think and speak of Him. In some form or other, we are as familiar with the idea of His being a father as of His being a judge. Why is this? To what are we indebted for this superior knowledge of God and eternity? The light of men on these subjects is now perfect day compared with the brightest periods of the light of nature. What created the difference? You are ready to say, the Bible. Revelation has unveiled the true character of God; life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. All the true light in the world has shone from the oracles of God.

True, but when you have said all this, you surely do not think that you have traced the light of men to its original source. All the natural light we enjoy is from the sun, but he is only the reservoir of it. Light itself was created before the sun, and sprang forth at the command of God. In like manner, the

Bible is to divine light what the body of the sun is to natural light; not the original source of it, but that which contains and disperses it. The life is the light of men; and the Bible is full of light, because it is full of Christ—the Author of eternal life.

Perhaps at first sight this may seem a distinction without a difference; for, unless you have been very much struck with the fact itself, you will hardly anticipate the use I am about to make of it, nor the exact point to which the distinction will lead. It is, however, an important one, and should I succeed in explaining it, the effect will be not to change your views of the Bible, but to exalt them.

Now, observe: We are indebted to the Bible for all our light in matters of religion; to what, then, are we indebted for the Bible itself? All our light comes from it; from whence, then, came its own light? The Bible is our sun, but from what source was it filled with the light it diffuses? The common answer to such questions is: The Bible is the word of God; we are indebted to Him for all it reveals.

True, this answer is correct so far, but it does not go far enough. In this general form it leaves uncertain, indeed unseen, the motive which led God to reveal His will, the principle which guided that revelation, and the character, too, in which God spoke.

I ask, therefore, again, to what feeling or purpose of the Eternal Mind are we indebted for the word of God? In what capacity did He speak to the world?

as a sovereign, or as a lawgiver, or as a judge, or as a father? If you say He has spoken something in each capacity, then I ask again, which capacity took the lead in Revelation? Whether has He said most as king or as father? What predominates in His word,—love or law?

This matter should not be disposed of by merely saying that a revelation of the divine will was necessary for man as an accountable being, and therefore God gave him one; the question still returns: Why did God give us His word, and in what character did He speak? Now, it is not a direct answer to this inquiry to say that from a being infinitely good, a revelation of some kind might naturally be expected. This is the ground usually taken in arguing with deists. Accordingly, so far as I can recollect the character of the leading books written in defence of the Bible, the probability, propriety, and necessity of a revelation from God to man is the basis of all the reasonings. The defenders press deists with such questions as the following: Would it not be worthy of God to communicate some knowledge of Himself to His creatures? Is it likely that the Father of our spirits should leave them in ignorance, or to mere conjecture? If we are accountable and immortal, is it not reasonable to expect some information in regard to the grounds of our responsibility, and the nature of our prospects? These are solemn and solid points, and both unanswered and unanswerable by any infidel who admits the being and beneficence of God. But

while I admire such methods of accounting for the Bible to those who deny its divine origin, I object to the frequent use of them amongst those who receive the Bible as the word of God. They at least, and especially those who believe it with the heart, should be treated in another way than deists; should be made and kept fully aware not only of the general principles which secured a revelation to man, but also of the leading principle or cause which produced that revelation we have, for the circumstances which account for one of some kind will not account for it. The Bible reveals the free gift of eternal life to sinners through the death of the Son of God; and this is a matter so singular, a plan so sublime, a measure so far removed from both the letter and the spirit of natural religion, that no human reasonings are applicable to it. Our being accountable and immortal does not warrant the expectation of, much less establish a right to, such a gift.

It may be only just that we should know something of the God with whom we have to do, and only fair to have a Bible of some kind; but such a Bible as we have is infinitely beyond all that could be rationally expected as right or favour.

Hence the necessity of questioning and cross-questioning ourselves, until we are fully sensible of the real source from whence so much light has flowed into the Bible. Now, John explains this: 'The life was the light of men.' The gift of eternal life through Christ led to all that is said or shown in Scripture.

To predict that gift, or to explain it, or to commend it, is the grand object of revelation, and the positive cause of it. The Bible is full of light, just because Christ is full of life: the light that is in it is the exhibition of the life that is in Him. Had there been no life in Christ for man, there would have been no light for man, but the light of nature.

You begin now to perceive what I am aiming at, and I hope to perceive that the subject is likely to repay the attention it is sure to require. I cannot simplify it at once; but if you follow me, you will be familiar with it before we close.

Now, John sums up the contents of the Bible thus: 'This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and that life is in his Son.' As if the apostle had said: Scripture records nothing but what is in some way connected with the gift of eternal life. Men have light, just because they may have life. In this point of view the Bible assumes quite a new aspect, and comes before us not only as 'the word of God,' but also as 'the word of life.' Let us therefore review the successive revelations given to man as light emanating from the eternal life which is in Christ.

Eternal life was forfeited by the fall. The loss of holiness involved the loss of heaven. Death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, came by sin, and must have continued had not God provided a Saviour who died that we might live. This the Son of God did, and thus became a quickening or life-giving Spirit, the

right of bestowing eternal life being the reward of His own death. This glorious event did not, however, actually take place until the fulness of time; an interval of four thousand years elapsed before Christ appeared, declaring: 'The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' But during that long interval frequent intimations of His life-giving death were received from heaven, and these were the light of man in every age, brightening as it shone into the perfect day.

The promise of the gift of eternal life through Christ was the light of our first parents and of the first families of mankind. The religious knowledge which cheered and encouraged them in a world of sin and death, was not the lingering twilight of the sun which set in Eden, but the predicted rising of the Sun of Righteousness; was not what the first Adam recollected of God and glory, but the revelation of what the last Adam should do. Their light shone not from the wrecks of the Eden economy, nor from a new system of laws, but from the promise of eternal life by Christ.

Now, this is both a more distinct and scriptural idea than merely saying that God revealed His character and will to the world again, after the knowledge of them was lost by sin. This is true; but for anything that appears upon the surface of the statement, the new revelation might be nothing more than knowledge, nothing better than the reassertion of the Divine authority and government; whereas, the real

fact is, that all the knowledge was the knowledge of salvation; all the light the promise of eternal life. Whatever laws, ordinances, or counsels were given to the first families of mankind, were grounded upon the promise of a Saviour, sprung out of it, and led to it. As the cherubim and flaming sword upon the gate of Eden kept the way to the tree of life, so all the new commands and appointments of God were measures for manifesting His gracious purpose of sending his Son to be the life of the world.

This gives quite a new character to the early revelations of divine things. While we think of them merely as knowledge, and compare them with our own light, they seem too few and feeble to have had much interest or effect; but in supposing this, we forget that they all concerned eternal life through the death of Christ, an object so dazzling in itself that it could not be presented so dimly as to be uninteresting. In any shape or degree of manifestation, it must have been a burning and shining light, because it was the only light. If God did not, therefore, speak so plainly nor so fully then as He has done since, what He did say was all on one subject, and that subject the chief thing which belongs to the eternal peace of man. Salvation was the matter whatever was the manner of revelation.

All the lights of the Bible shine from the eternal life that is in Christ. Everything written for our instruction has for its chief and first object to endear God to us as the God of salvation. If, therefore,

He denounce sin, it is because He is intent on saving us from it; if He demand obedience, it is because He will give grace to produce it; and if the doctrines of His word are absolute, and admit of no rejection, it is because they are the power of God unto salvation. Life, spiritual life here, and eternal life hereafter, are the source and centre of all we are bound to do or believe. This view of the matter will become more obvious and interesting as we proceed.

The covenants which ratified the promise of eternal life through Christ, were the light of men in the patriarchal age.

When the deafening roar of the deluge was silenced by the subsiding of the waters, God spoke again to man. His voice was heard on Mount Ararat, as it had been in Eden; and again the life was the light of man. Gospel, not law, breathed in the covenant ratified with Noah. The word of God to him was not an exposure of the crimes which brought the flood upon the world, not even a warning against them; the flood itself was left to do all this by the sound of its many waters; and God, as usual, confined Himself to publishing salvation. The eternal purpose of sending His Son to be the life of the world had been in no wise shaken by the ungodliness of the world; and that it might appear unshaken amidst the shattered frame of nature, no time was lost in making it dart forth new light upon man. This it did; and as the tree of life, that original emblem of the

covenant of peace, had been engulphed by the deluge, the rainbow of the heavens was assumed as the symbol in its stead, and every law given to the family of Noah was a light shed upon the promise of a Saviour.

In the same spirit the covenant was ratified with Abraham. The increased light of his period shone from the life treasured up in Christ; and this, as in the case of the first families of mankind, is the cause why so little was said to the patriarchs. Much was not necessary, when all related to 'the one thing needful;' and, that being the gift of eternal life through Christ, it was hardly possible to state it so slightly as to leave it uninteresting.

Accordingly, we never hear of any of the patriarchs complaining of what, compared with our own, we should call dim discoveries of the way of salvation. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ afar off; in faith of it, Isaac submitted calmly to be laid on the altar. In a similar spirit Jacob waited for the salvation of God. All this is wonderful, upon the usual supposition of their knowing so little; but the wonder ceases the moment we understand that the life was the light of man in all ages. For although the plan of salvation did not come before the patriarchs, enshrined in all the light of its fulfilment, neither did it come before them encumbered, as it now is, with the controversies of the world. The only point at issue, then, was whether Jehovah or Baal was the true God; and those who believed

Jehovah to be so were left by others to the undisputed possession of all they knew or hoped of a Saviour. Thus the life being their light, very little of it was amply sufficient, in such a state of society as the patriarchs lived in. And this was the object and character of all their knowledge; if they were commanded to build altars, and burn sacrifices, these pointed to the Lamb slain; if they were sent out as pilgrims to Canaan, Canaan was the type and pledge of that heaven which is the seat and consummation of eternal life.

Here, again, I ask you to pause and observe how the revelations vouchsafed by God were not assertions of His authority as God; not demonstrations of His being or will, but disclosures of the purposes of grace, proofs of His willingness to save, and exhibitions of the plan of salvation. All He said by His word, and all He did by His providence, bore upon this one point. Not a single ray of light shone from the Father of lights but what led to Christ as the Author of eternal life.

Even the light shed upon men by the Mosaic dispensation, shone from the purpose and promise of life through the death of Christ. Yes, under what Paul calls the ministration of death, 'the life was the light of men.' These two assertions are not in the least contradictory or incompatible. Paul himself both makes them, and reconciles them (Gal. iii. 17); that promise was the gift of eternal life through Christ, which, instead of being set aside by the

law, was made sure by it. Accordingly Paul argues: Who was that seed in whom the promise was to be fulfilled? Agreeably to this view of the matter, the law itself is expressly said to be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, and a witness in common with the prophets to the righteousness which is by faith in Christ (Rom. iii. 21, 22). Thus the law itself witnessed in favour of the principle of justification without the law, and was therefore itself light from the life treasured up in Christ. There is solid and harmonious sense in this view of the matter, whereas it is the mere jargon of a human system to call the law a covenant of works made with the Jews. They, indeed, considered it as such, and turned it against grace; but that abuse of it did not alter its own nature.

The direct light which beamed from the law, not only showed the necessity of the promised Saviour, but, from its connection with the covenant and the sacrifices, actually pointed to Him as the alone refuge of the guilty.

Distinguish, therefore, and understand: when the Scriptures contrast the law and the Gospel, it is not the law as given by God in connection with the promise of eternal life, but the law as turned by men into the condition of life, or as taken up and adhered to in opposition to, or in partnership with Christ.

Against this, the New Testament bends all the force of its reasoning, and all the fire of its remon-

strances, until the law of God almost seems the chief enemy of the Gospel of God; but it requires only a moment's consideration to be convinced that man makes it this enemy, and not God. God never would have introduced and established a system subversive of the Gospel, or at variance with the covenant of grace. It is absurd to imagine such a thing.

Accordingly, the law, as He gave it, and keeps it, and intends it, is itself light from the gift of life; for, had not God purposed to bestow eternal life through His Son, He would never have given law to sinners—indeed, it would have been useless to do so; for what could sinners have made of it? Absolutely nothing. But now, by the law, is the knowledge of sin; and as, without that knowledge, men neither know the value nor feel the need of a Saviour, the law may well be considered as a light leading to Christ. Its heaviest curse and hardest rules are, therefore, direct methods of endearing that Saviour, who, that He might give life, died to satisfy both.

I have condensed into a small compass the pith of this vast subject; and though it amply deserves more illustration, I must leave it by again asking you to observe how, in the most terrific period of revelation, it was not in the mere character of a sovereign that God spoke: even while giving law in thunder upon Mount Sinai, 'the life was still the light of men.' God was only taking necessary and effectual measures for maintaining the knowledge and explain-

ing the nature of His eternal purposes of grace and salvation.

If I have succeeded in proving this to your satisfaction, it will now be almost needless to show how all the light diffused by prophecy originated from the life treasured up in Christ. This must be a self-evident proposition, when you remember that to Him all the prophets gave witness. I therefore pass it, and proceed to show how the settled purpose and plan of giving eternal life through the death of Christ led to the giving of all the light which revelation has shed upon the world.

The plan of salvation is the manifold wisdom of God, and embodies in itself both all the love and all the glory of the Deity. Now, if the defenders of revelation argue from the infinite perfection of God that a Bible of some kind might be expected, and would be a gift worthy of such a being, then I argue that such a Bible as ours, was sure since that being had resolved to bestow eternal life through His Son.

Because such a resolution deserved to be made known. Nothing so glorious as salvation had ever emanated from God; nothing equally glorious ever can emanate from Him, because the death of His Son will never be repeated, whatever moral changes may take place in the universe during the lapses of eternity: for now Christ ever liveth. Such being the real state of the case, it was not likely that God would conceal the purposes and plans of such grace:

they had occupied the Eternal Mind so long and deeply; engaged the eternal sympathies and feelings so entirely; and were so intimately connected both with the glory and government of God, that He was as sure to reveal His generous purposes as to form them. He owed it to Himself to exhibit the magnificent results of His everlasting counsels and infinite love; and as His own happiness could not be increased by suppressing, nor diminished by disclosing the knowledge of them, the very character of God secured to man light concerning that life He had decreed to give. Besides, no good end could have been answered by hiding the purpose: indeed, the only effect of such a measure would have been the surprise of those who were taken to heaven without knowing why, or how, or what it was: a state of mind equally unworthy of God, and unfit for glory. There will be enough of surprise as it is.

The plan of salvation required to be made known. It is no affectation when I preface this remark by declaring that I know not what to say first; so many cogent reasons throng in, claiming precedence of each other, that I am at a loss which to choose. However, I cannot choose wrong. Well, the plan required to be made known, for otherwise it would not be executed. It embraced the ministering angels; and that involved the disclosure of it in heaven, that they might know what they had to do for the Saviour and the heirs of salvation. It embraced the system

of animal sacrifice for ages, to illustrate its grand principle, that without shedding of blood there is no remission; and that could only be introduced by publicly assigning the reasons for such a measure. It embraced the incarnation of the Son of God; and that could only be accomplished honourably by being foretold openly, and the object of it explained clearly. It embraced the humiliation of the Son of God; and that could not be effected but by sending Him into the world. It embraced His sufferings and death; and those could not have been brought about, so that men could have known them to be an atonement, without knowing beforehand how He was to suffer and die. Thus the historical parts of the plan of salvation involved the necessity of revelation; the life had to give light, in order to lead naturally to the death of Christ. But this is too general. One chief part of eternal life is, we are assured, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; and this secured a revelation of their character, as the means of knowing them. Another chief ingredient of eternal life is holiness; and as true holiness is the holiness of the truth, or conformity to the will of God, this secured a revelation of His will; and heaven being the consummation of eternal life, and as no purpose was to be answered by concealing it from those who were to inherit it, the Gospel of life naturally brought immortality to light.

Since, then, all scriptural light has sprung from the gift of eternal life in Christ, how shameful and sinful

is it to trifle with the light of the Gospel! This is a crime of far greater magnitude and malignity than appears by saying of the careless, they do not read their Bibles, nor reflect upon the word of God. This would, indeed, be bad enough whatever the Bible contained. This is nothing compared with their neglect. They are trifling not so much with eternal *law*, as with eternal *life;* not so directly with divine *authority*, as with infinite *love*. You may imagine that they are only evading duties not convenient at present; only postponing things not agreeable. Deluded judges! They are pouring contempt upon the most glorious salvation which the united Godhead could devise; risking souls which all heaven rushed to save; trifling with eternal life. What a fearful spectacle is a *careless* man in this point of view! The Father beseeching, the Son bleeding, the Spirit striving; and yet the sinner resisting, and smiling at the ease with which he can take the matter. Heaven open in all its glory; hell uncovered in all its gloom; and yet the sinner standing as unmoved as if he were an idiot, or expected to be annihilated at death! What shall I say? I could speak daggers to the unconcerned, if I could forget that I myself was once equally thoughtless. But I cannot forget the wormwood and gall of that state: my soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me. Oh, view not the great salvation in a wrong light! It is your *life;* your *eternal all* is involved in it, and every act of neglect is an outrage upon bound-

less, beseeching, bleeding, dying love! Have pity upon your own immortal soul. All heaven cares for it; and will you care nothing? By the mercies of the Lord, by the terrors of the Lord, I implore you to pause and weigh the matter!

Since, then, all scriptural light has sprung from eternal life, with what lively attention and adoring wonder we ought to study the Word of God! Regarding it merely as a lesson or lecture about religion, or even as the standard of truth and holiness, is a poor, tame, soulless feeling, when eternal life is the substance of the Bible. Why, revelation is mercy rolling back the curtains of the eternal throne to unveil the God of love; is mercy moving forward that throne, to render the Lamb slain visible in the midst of it; is mercy disclosing the river of life, flowing full and free from it; is mercy pointing to crowns and mansions of glory; is mercy exhibiting myriads of redeemed spirits once guilty and vile as we are; is mercy leading forward eternity, glowing with the immortal splendour of all that God has done, or will do, laden with the weight of glory, resounding with the Alleluiahs of the universe, and teeming with the future wonders, which through everlasting ages shall bless the general assembly of saints and angels! Man! immortal! awake to the grandeur and grace of thy Bible! It is the telescope by which two eternities are rendered visible; each thronged with stars which shine to guide, to cheer, to exalt, and which will shine for ever and ever! The past eternity, like the

material heavens, is seen crowded with the redeeming purposes and plans, and covenant of grace; the coming eternity, rich and radiant with the scenes and felicities of glory.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOLOMON: THE ROYAL PREACHER.

OF all sacred biographies, no life presents such a lesson as Solomon's upon the subject of human instability. It is the very climax of weakness and strength, wisdom and folly, vice and virtue. It was therefore worthy of God to give the picture of Solomon at full length to the world and the church in the Scriptures; for both need the lessons it teaches. The world still thinks that wealth, luxury, and amusement may be pursued with safety, and yield happiness to their votaries; and the church is not so much afraid of them, nor so jealous of herself, as her Saviour and Sovereign commands her to be.

She fears no evil, indeed, so little as 'the evil of the world,' although that be the only evil of all she is exposed to, which Christ in His last intercessory prayer pleaded that she might be 'kept from.' Not a word, you will observe, about the danger which arises from Satanic temptation, or from State persecution, or from public reproach, although on all other

occasions, except in His parting prayer, the Saviour warned His disciples against everything evil which was likely to ensnare or seduce them. This is a remarkable fact, especially in reference to the apostles. They were of all men the least connected with the business and bustle, gains or gaieties, of the world; and then they were just about to be inspired, and thus to have miraculous gifts blended with all their grace; and yet Christ did not think them safe from the evil of the world, but in so much danger from worldly influence, that all other dangers were passed over by Him in silence in His last prayer. The Saviour showed by this that 'He knew what was in man,' and thus prayed most against what we dread least.

Experience in all ages has verified the profound wisdom and prudence of this prayer. The love of the world drowns far more in destruction and perdition, and draws more into lukewarmness and backsliding, than all the fiery darts of Satan, or the swords and sneers of persecution. And it is equally true that good principles, however gracious and holy, are not a safeguard against 'the evil of the world,' any further or longer than they are upheld by prayerfulness on our own part, and by the intercession of Christ for us. If ever good men were safe to trust their stedfastness to the innate vitality of good principles, or to the native tendencies of true grace, or could have passed unspotted and undeadened through the world, the apostles would have been the safest,

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remains to be told. He became a voluptuary and an idolater, or at least the abettor and patron of idolatry. The man who built the temple of Jehovah did this! 'Lord, what is man?'

Solomon must have been backsliding long before he fell thus shamefully, and must have all along been duping himself with some plausible and subtle sophistry of his own invention; for whatever atheistical or metaphysical philosophy he drank in, whilst indulging in the wild speculations of the Arabian scholars of Dedan and Deman, needs as much to be accounted for as the vile idolatries which followed his reckless theorizing.

He shows in his Ecclesiastes that he had been all but an atheist before he became an idolater. Now we have seen that he was anything but a devotional man after the completion of the Temple. This proves that he was not only ignorant of his own weakness, and of the power of temptation, but also that he had a high opinion of his own strength, and a proud confidence in his self-control. It is evident that he began his career of speculation, experiment, and indulgence, under an idea that he could go lengths with safety which ordinary men, or any other man, could not venture upon without certain ruin. There can be little doubt, judging from his Proverbs, that he would have deemed any of his own wild or ambitious experiments the high road to final apostasy in the case of even his cleverest friends and companions. Had the young men of his court or kingdom

inquired whether it was safe for them to read the sceptical and atheistical books he studied, or to plunge as he was doing into all the dark and daring questions which human curiosity or infernal ingenuity had started, he would have warned them against such speculations, as being equally impious, perilous, and vain, and said to each: 'Know thou, O young man, that God will bring thee into judgment!'

Solomon thought, however, that he could indulge both the lusts of the flesh and the mind to a degree which no other man could safely venture upon. This is no conjecture. 'I turned myself,' he says, 'to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly. Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy; yet acquainting myself with wisdom!' There it is! He proudly presumed that he could stop or retreat at any point of his career, and come unhurt out of any experiment he ventured upon. He was confident that nothing could enslave or trammel him a moment longer than he chose. He reckoned that he saw so thoroughly through all business, pleasure, and speculation, and had such self-control, that he could play with anything human or divine, without committing himself too far, or cutting off his retreat when he found the game too hazardous.

Oh, how unlike the man he was, when he humbly prayed: 'Now, O Lord God, give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people that is so great'! Accordingly, whilst Solomon

sought wisdom in this way, he never had to exclaim, 'Vanity of vanities,' nor to complain of 'vexation of spirit.' But when he began to read, study, or speculate without prayerfulness, and to vie with heathen kings in luxury, and with heathen philosophers in wit, taste, science, and sophistry, all truth, human and divine, acquired in his undevotional spirit an equal aspect of uncertainty and mystery; and then it was only natural for him to humour the idolatrous tastes of his queens as mere follies. Truth and duty had become to himself 'doubtful disputations,' and thus idolatry seemed to him merely a harmless whim, not worth opposing so long as it was kept out of the Temple. Now there is nothing in all this, as to the spirit and result of it, but just what happens still, although upon a smaller scale, whenever the young, old, or middle-aged give way to an overweening confidence in their own power of self-control, or their own ability of meddling with all knowledge. Many a young man thus reads and reasons himself out of the first principles of the oracles of God, and into the last problems of the ungodly; and many a clever man thus takes liberties with law and Gospel, which, although they stop short of turning the grace of God into licentiousness, yet strain the conscience and blind the feelings, so that what is good about him does no good to others, and yields no comfort to himself. In a word, a stranger to prayer may be estranged in the long run even from the form as well as from the power of Godliness. Thus from Solomon's

experience we see that the learned philosopher and the wisest moralist may become fools, and after sitting for years at the feet of science and ethics, sink into the grossest sensuality, because there is no safeguard in their knowledge against temptation. But the word of Christ is an eternal antidote against sin. Wherever it dwells richly in the heart, it defeats temptation. You have seen or heard how men may sit at the feet of the Muses and the arts, and yet remain the slaves of vice, and the dupes of infidelity; but you have neither heard nor seen that any one who chose to learn of Christ was left under the dominion of vice or error. Genius may be prostituted, philosophy may take wings and fly away before the strength of passion and the storm of temptation; but 'the wisdom that cometh from above is pure' and purifying, and although it may be shaken for a moment on the throne of the heart, it will recover its composure and triumph gloriously. And is it nothing in a world like this to be fortified against its snares? Would you not rather be at the feet of Jesus, than at the feet of the world, the flesh, and the devil? 'Godliness is profitable for this life, and for that which is to come.' The knowledge taught by Christ will endure and expand through eternity. Nothing can happen to render it useless or untrue. Our knowledge of earthly things may prove of no use whatever in the next world. But the knowledge of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of angels and of heaven, will be an introduction to them all, and a preparation for enjoying them. Our theories of the

universe and the starry heavens may turn out to be only learned ignorance; but all that we know of God and glory is sure to be realized and surpassed infinitely by 'open vision.' 'We shall know even as we are known.' And when the whole field of divine knowledge is thrown open in heaven, glowing under the light of eternity, and teeming with all the wonders of nature, providence, and redemption, the scene will be unchangeable and unclouded, for ever improving and expanding in all its glories. Choose now, therefore, that good part which shall never be taken away from you; or, to sum up the results of Solomon's experience in his own language: 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.'

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